BASIS FOR PLANNING
TOWN OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

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DATE:	November, 1974
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ABSTRACT:	The report contains background data and information on economic and population trends; existing land use; housing; transportation; natural resources and characteristics; educational facilities; parks and recreation facilities; public buildings; and public utilities for the Town of Merrillville, Indiana. The information included in the report will be used as the basis for preparing the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Merrillville.
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BASIS FOR PLANNING
TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

Prepared for

Merrillville Town Plan Commission

Project Ind. P-1030

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Prepared by

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November, 1974

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November, 1974

Town Plan Commission
Merrillville, Indiana

Dear Mr. Chairman and
Members of the Commission:

We are pleased to submit the first preliminary report on the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Merrillville. The report represents the completion of Phase I of the Planning Program, and includes all of the data and studies necessary as the basis for planning.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of many citizens and officials during the preparation of this report.

Sincerely,

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

Thompson A. Dyke
Associate Partner

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES	3
Climate	3
Geology	5
Soils	11
Hydrology	23
Flora and Fauna	27
Areas for Nature Preserves, Parks and Green Belts	31
LAND USE	37
Principles	37
Character and Analysis of Existing Development	38
Land Use Problems	47
HOUSING	49
Housing Conditions	49
Housing Types	49
Housing Issues	51
Conclusions	53
TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES	55
Major Thoroughfares	55
Railroad Facilities	63
ECONOMIC BASE	65
The Regional Economy	65
Town of Merrillville	65
POPULATION	73
Number of Inhabitants and Dynamics of Population Change	73
Population Characteristics	76
Area Population Projections	78
Analysis by Planning Component	80
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES	85
Principles and Standards	85
Existing Facilities	86
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES	93
Elements of a Park System	93
Existing Park Facilities	95
Adequacy of Existing Facilities	95
Potential Park Facilities	97

TABLE OF CONTENTS - CONTINUED

	Page
PUBLIC BUILDINGS	99
Existing Facilities	99
UTILITIES	101
Water	101
Sanitary Sewer Systems	105
Storm Drainage	106

INDEX TO PLATES

Plate		Page
1	Topography and Major Tree Cover	7
2	Surface Geology	9
3	Soils Associations	13
4	Soils with Slight Limitations for Septic Fields	19
5	Soils with Severe Limitations for Foundations with Low Buildings	21
6	Surface Water and Floodplains	25
7	Opportunities for Resource Preservation .	33
8	Land Use 1974	39
9	Generalized Land Use - 1974	41
10	Traffic Volumes	57
11	Circulation Problems	61
12	Statistical Boundaries for Census Data .	74
13	Planning Components	81
14	School and Park Facilities	87
15	Water Distribution System	103
16	Sanitary Sewer System	107
17	Major Areas Known to be Served by Storm Sewers	109

INDEX TO TABLES

Table		Page
1	Land Use 1974	44
2	Selected Housing Data for Merrillville-Lottaville-Rexville Area - 1970	50
3	Employment in Merrillville - 1971	67
4	Industry Grouping of Residents - 1970 . .	68
5	Building Permits in Unincorporated Areas of Ross Township, 1969-1973	70
6	Population Trends, 1960-1973	75
7	Components of Population Change, 1960-1970	75
8	Age Distribution	77
9	Household Income - 1970	79
10	Population and Population Density	83
11	Total Enrollment for Ross Township School Corporation, 1966-1972	91

INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is the recommended primary basis for all implementing legal tools. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a guide for the coordinated and harmonious development of the Town which will, in accordance with the present and future needs, best promote the general welfare of the community during the process of development.

The preparation of the Comprehensive Plan includes the development of maps, charts, reports, and planning policies specifically for the planning area which form the basis for zoning and subdivision regulations, and the capital improvements program.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the basis for rational zoning decisions. Without a Comprehensive Plan, there is little basis for the rational allocation of land use. A Comprehensive Plan, when properly administered, can assure that the public welfare is being served and that zoning amendments are based on goals developed for the Comprehensive Plan rather than pressure exerted by private property interests.

While the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan is a necessary first step, the execution of the Plan must be made a continuous part of the day-to-day activities of the Plan Commission and Town Board. Municipalities grow by the addition of relatively small parts, and each of these new areas must be incorporated into the Plan over a long period of time. The Comprehensive Plan must be practical if its objectives are to be realized and, to this end, the Plan should be modified, revised and amended in order that it always represents the latest and best thinking in regards to the future of Merrillville.

NATURAL FEATURES AND RESOURCES

Climate[1]

The Merrillville area has a somewhat modified continental climate because it is located near Lake Michigan. Arctic air masses are warmed as they pass over the Great Lakes, moderating Merrillville's late autumn and winter temperatures. During the summer, local lake breezes may sometimes block the flow of warm air from the south. However, the summers are warm and rather humid, the winters are fairly cold, and the weather changes quickly.

The area's average monthly temperatures range from the upper twenties in January to the upper sixties in July, an average seasonal range of about 40 degrees. Temperatures of 60 degrees or higher may occur during the winter months, while lows in the sixties may be recorded in summer. Chicago's meteorological station at Midway Airport reports that a low of -10° F. occurs in about half the winters, while temperatures of 99° F., or above, are recorded in about half the summers. The normal heating season extends from mid-September to early June, with 55 percent of the heating load concentrated in December, January and February. The cooling, or air conditioning season, extends from mid-June to early September. The last spring freeze occurs around April 20th, and the average date of the first fall freeze is October 26th, giving the area a growing season of about 189 days.

Normal annual total precipitation is 33.18 inches, of which 10.60, or 32 percent, falls in the summer. For the other seasons, spring receives an average of 29 percent of the total yearly precipitation, autumn 23 percent, and winter 16 percent. Thundershowers - the primary source of moisture in the summer - are often locally heavy and variable. Autumn, winter and spring precipitation, on the other hand, usually falls from regional storms and is, therefore, more widely distributed, gentle and continuous.

An average of 38.9 inches of snow falls annually, accounting for 10 percent of the area's precipitation. Although month-to-month and year-to-year snowfall varies greatly, January and February receive the most snow (9.7 inches average). For about half the years, the first one inch snowfall occurs by December 5th, with the last before March 20th.

---

(1) Source: Local Climatological Data, Annual Summary with Comparative Data, Chicago, Illinois, 1971. U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Data Service.

The area averages 57 percent of possible sunshine. Local effects of Lake Michigan are responsible for considerable cloudiness, particularly during the winter when the Merrillville vicinity averages only six clear days per month. There is a moderate amount of sunshine during the summer, but the clearest weather occurs from mid-summer through late fall. August and September, for example, average only nine cloudy days each. Fog is infrequent during all seasons.

The relative humidity is fairly high, averaging 66 percent throughout the year. A combination of high temperatures and high relative humidity can sometimes make summer days oppressive.

Excluding the local off-lake breezes, the prevailing winds blow from the west and southwest. The annual mean wind speed is 10.4 miles per hour, although the lake breezes may be somewhat more brisk locally. The mean wind speed is higher during the winter and spring (11.4 mph) than during the summer and fall (9.3 mph). In the last 29 years, the highest wind velocity recorded at the Midway Airport meteorological station was 60 miles per hour in November, 1952.

The southern shore of Lake Michigan experiences air pollution, as does almost every major metropolitan area in the United States. Smoke, exhaust fumes and other contaminants are often carried away by winds during autumn, winter and spring, when the average wind velocity is greater than during the summer, and when the wind generally blows pollutants away from Merrillville. When there is little wind, or when off-shore breezes prevail, pollutants may accumulate to extremely noxious levels in the Merrillville area even though Merrillville itself generates little air pollution.

Geology[2]

The geologic history of the present southern border of Lake Michigan was relatively uncomplicated until the Pleistocene when continental glaciers covered much of the United States. Prior to this event, the area was periodically submerged, and sediments were deposited over it. At intervals, the land was uplifted and erosion took place, removing previously deposited sediments. For this reason, some geologic rock systems are not represented (Mississippian, Pennsylvanian, Cretaceous and Tertiary).

The area's structural geology is unimpressive because the rocks have not been subjected to faulting and folding. The strata dip gently to the southeast with little interruption.

Stratigraphy

Ancient red granite Precambrian basement rocks, the youngest of which are estimated to be one to 1.5 billion years old, underlie the Merrillville area at a depth of approximately 4,500 feet. Three thousand to 4,000 feet of late Cambrian age sandstones, dolomites and siltstones overlie the granite and several water-bearing formations occur in this geologic system. Younger Ordovician rocks, composed primarily of dolomites, limestones and shales, are found above the Cambrian. These formations range from 700 to 1,000 feet thick. Several hundred feet of Silurian dolomite overlie the Ordovician, and it forms the bedrock just to the west of the Study Area. Bedrock in the vicinity of Merrillville is composed of younger Devonian limestone overlain by black shale (Upper Devonian in age). In turn, the shale is covered with unconsolidated Pleistocene glacial sediments. Almost all of this material dates from the Wisconsinan glacial stage, 75,000 to 7,000 years ago. Modern soil covers the glacial sediments.

---

(2) Sources: Willman, H.B. (1971), Summary of the Geology of the Chicago Area. Circular 460, Illinois State Geological Survey, State of Illinois, Department of Registration and Education. Frey, R.W., and M.A. Lane (Eds.) 1966. A Survey of Indiana Geology with Road Logs for Two Field Trips. Rho Chapter, Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Indiana University, Department of Geology. Cressey, G.B. 1928. The Indiana Sand Dunes and Shorelines of the Lake Michigan Basin. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois. Lake-Porter Regional Transportation and Planning Commission. Undated. Guidelines for Growth in the Lake-Porter Region. A Comprehensive Plan for the Lake-Porter Region, Indiana.

Topography

The Merrillville area stands 30 to 150 feet higher than the surface of Lake Michigan, and the land is quite flat. Local relief rarely exceeds 15 feet, except along Deep River and several of its tributaries in the southeast corner of the Study Area. Here the landscape is more rolling, and several small hills rise 40 feet above the adjacent stream valleys. One of these hills, at about elevation 730, is the highest point in the Study Area. The lowest land (610 feet) within Merrillville's limits, is along Turkey Creek where it crosses the eastern corporate boundary. (See Plate 1.)

Although the area appears relatively featureless, it is divided into two topographic units, based on its glacial history. (See Plate 2.) The boundary between the Calumet Lacustrine Plain to the north and the Northern Lake and Moraine Region at the south runs east-west in the vicinity of 69th Avenue, dipping south to parallel Deep River. The Calumet Lacustrine Plain was covered by old Lake Chicago (Lake Michigan with the water level 55 to 60 feet higher) which was formed by melt water from the retreating Wisconsinan glacier about 14,000 years ago. The former lake bottom is very flat and somewhat poorly drained, with sluggish streams and marshy areas.

Glacial outwash and fine textured glacial till underlie the soil in the Northern Lake and Moraine Region, which includes the southern two-thirds of the Study Area. Although still relatively featureless, the land is better drained. There are more streams and fewer marshy areas. Much of this area is devoted to farming, whereas the northern portion on the Calumet Lacustrine Plain is more urbanized.

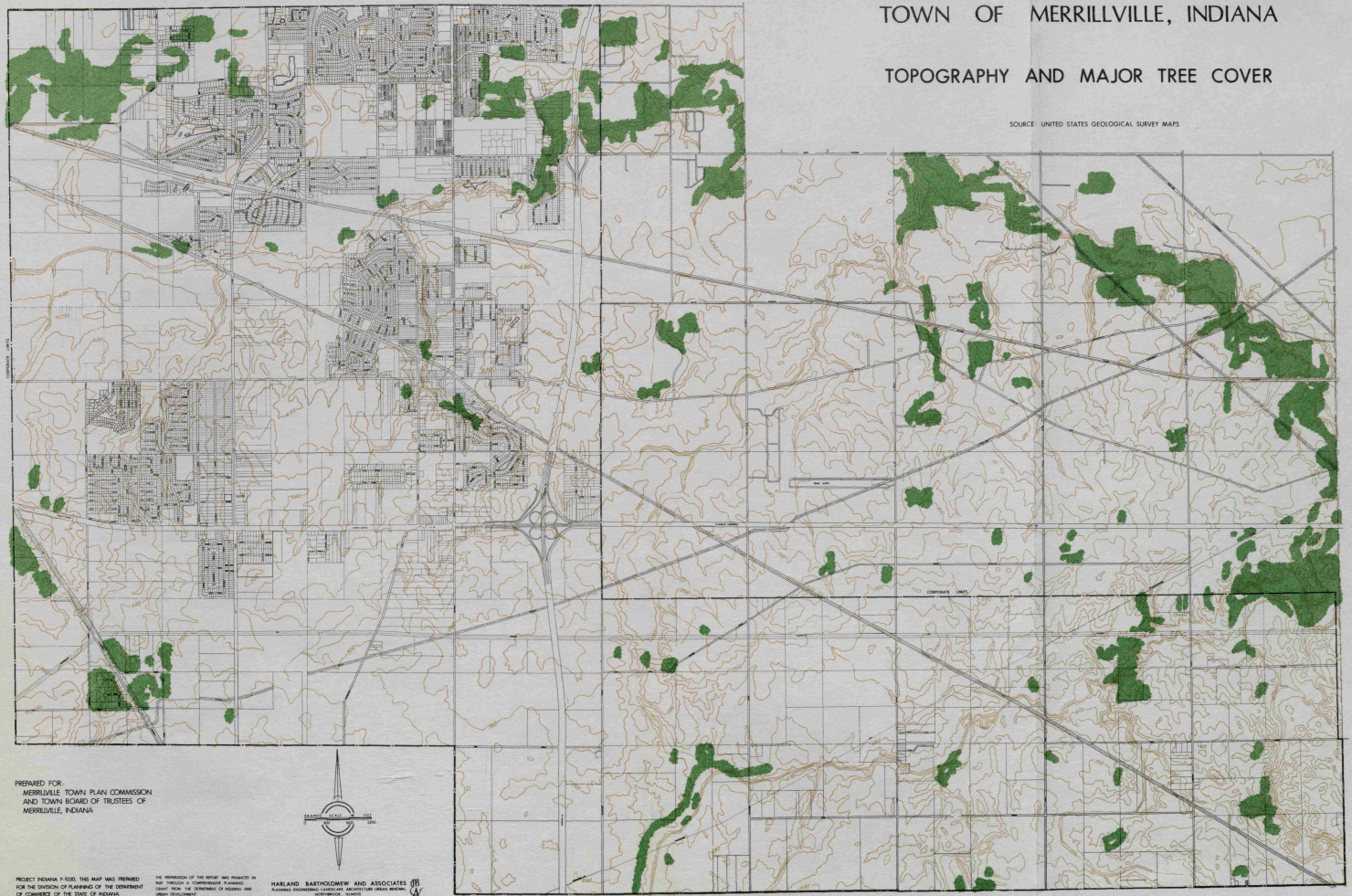
Economic Geology

High bulk-low value sand and gravel lenses in floodplain deposits and glacial outwash are found in the vicinity of Merrillville. Sand and gravel pits are developed for use in local construction, but because such mineral products are inexpensive, they do not constitute a significant economic resource. To date, no valuable geologic products - oil and gas, for example - have been found in the Merrillville area.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

TOPOGRAPHY AND MAJOR TREE COVER

SOURCE: UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAPS



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MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING-ENGINEERING-LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE-URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 1

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SURFACE GEOLOGY

TILL AREA
DUNE AND BEACH SAND OF LAKE CHICAGO

SOURCE: CRESSEY, G.B., 1928
THE INDIANA SAND DUNES AND SHORELINES OF THE LAKE MICHIGAN BASIN, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNERS ENGINEERS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 2

Soils[3]

There are four soil associations in the Merrillville Study Area. (See Plate 3.) The associations are related to topography and glacial history. Two of them lie in the Calumet Lake Plain Region, and the other two are in the Northern Lake and Moraine Region.

Plainfield-Watseka Association

The Plainfield-Watseka Association is the smallest unit in the Study Area, occupying the extreme northwest corner. (See Plate 3.) This is a valuable natural area and, although Plainfield-Watseka soils are often exploited for development, the excessive wetness of portions of this particular site has protected the area from intensive development.

The soils are formed on coarse textured glacial outwash of former beach ridges. Plainfield soils are excessively drained, lying on moderately sloping parts of the ridges. Nearly level Watseka soils, on the other hand, lie at the base of ridges and are rather poorly drained. For land use purposes, this association has the following limitations:

Building sites with public sewers: Plainfield soils have slight to moderate limitations because they slope and Watseka soils are moderately limited because they have occasional high water tables.

Building sites with septic tank filter fields: Slope and possible contamination of underground water supply imposes slight to moderate limitations on Plainfield soils, while occasional high water tables and contamination hazard severely limit Watseka soils.

Sanitary land fills: Both soils are poorly suited to this use because they are rapidly permeable below a depth of three feet, and sandy below four feet. Groundwater contamination is a hazard.

Highway and street location: Plainfield soils are generally suitable, but Watseka soils are moderately limited by sandy composition and occasional high water table.

---

(3) Source: Soil Conservation Service, April 1972. Generalized Soil Information for Lake and Porter Counties, Indiana. Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission.

Light and intensive recreation: Slope, sandiness, dryness and susceptibility to wind erosion severely limit the recreation potential of Plainfield soils. Watseka soils are moderately limited by their occasional high water tables and sandiness.

Intensive cropping: The characteristics that limit Plainfield's recreational use makes it unsuited to agriculture. Watseka is moderately limited by occasional high water table and sandiness.

Soils in this association provide good fill material.

Alida-Del Ray-Whitaker Association

The Alida-Del Ray-Whitaker Association supports some urban development, some farming, and some natural areas. These soils were formed on stratified glacial outwash and lake sediments, and lie in the Calumet Lake Plain Region of the Study Area. (See Plate 3.) They display the following limitations:

Building sites for public sewers: All three groups are moderately limited by occasionally high water tables. In addition, Del Ray and Whitaker are limited by susceptibility to frost heave and moderate shrink-swell potential.

Building sites with septic tank filter fields: The association is severely limited for this use. Contamination danger and occasional high water tables make the Alida group unsuitable. The Whitaker group is severely limited by slope and susceptibility to frost heave while Del Ray has the added problem of slow permeability.

Sanitary land fills: The Alida and Whitaker soils, because they are rapidly permeable below three feet and sandy below four feet, may allow land fills to contaminate underground water supplies and are, therefore, severely limited for land fill use. Occasional high water tables and high clay content place moderate limitations on Del Ray soils.

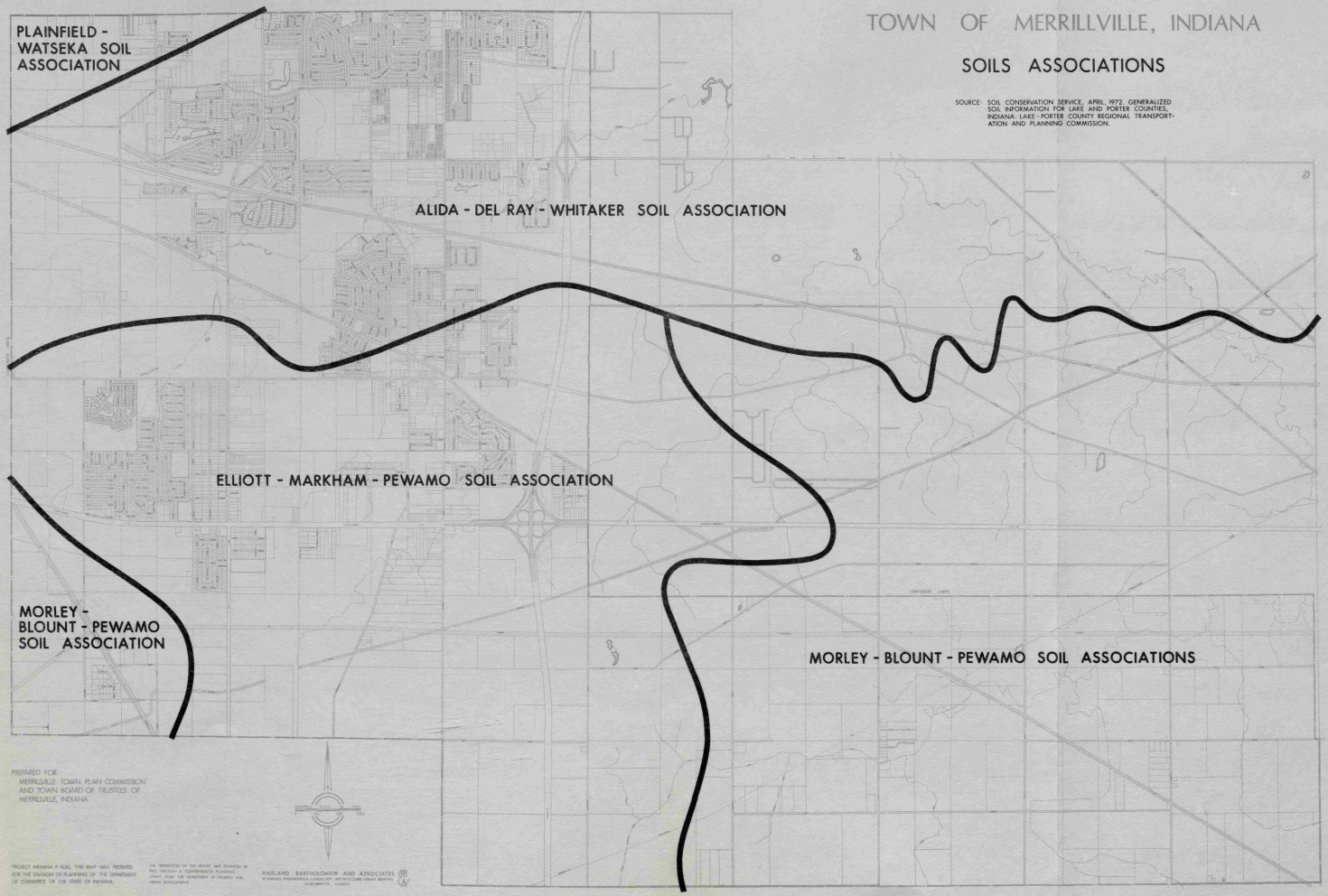
Highway and street location: Occasional high water tables and frost heave susceptibility moderately limit the association. High clay content in Whitaker soils is another disadvantage for building roads.

Light and intensive recreation: Moderate limitations are imposed by the association's occasional high water tables. Slow soil permeability further limits Del Ray soils for intensive recreation.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SOILS ASSOCIATIONS

SOURCE: SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, APRIL, 1972. GENERALIZED SOIL INFORMATION FOR LAKE AND PORTER COUNTIES, INDIANA. LAKE - PORTER COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND PLANNING COMMISSION.


PLAINFIELD - WATSEKA SOIL ASSOCIATION
ALIDA - DEL RAY - WHITAKER SOIL ASSOCIATION
ELLIOTT - MARKHAM - PEWAMO SOIL ASSOCIATION
MORLEY - BLOUNT - PEWAMO SOIL ASSOCIATION
MORLEY - BLOUNT - PEWAMO SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

PREPARED FOR MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS

PLATE 3

Intensive cropping: Occasional high water tables slightly limit all three groups' suitability to agriculture.

Soils in this association make fair to poor fill material because they have occasional high water tables, are susceptible to frost heave, and have moderate shrink-swell potential.

Morley-Blount-Pewamo Association

Morley-Blount-Pewamo are upland soils that developed on moderately fine textured glacial till. They occupy the southeast quarter and the southwest corner of the Merrillville area. (See Plate 3.) These soils are mainly used for agriculture, but some development is occurring along highways. Morley soils are found on upland ridges and knolls and are fairly well drained. Blount soils, which are somewhat poorly drained, occur on nearly level broad upland flats. Pewamo soils occupy narrow drainageways and nearly level swales in the upland. For land use, they have the following limitations:

Building sites with public sewers: Slope and high shrink-swell potential give Morley soils a slight to severe limitation rating. Blount soils are moderately limited by occasional high water table, high shrink-swell potential, and susceptibility to frost heave. Pewamo soils normally have a high water table and are subject to flooding and frost heave. Also, they are only slowly permeable, have high shrink swell potential, high clay content, and are slippery and sticky when wet. These characteristics, and combinations thereof, severely restrict their utility for any land use, except agriculture. They make good farmland, if drained.

Building sites with septic tank filter fields: Slope, slow permeability and high shrink-swell potential severely limit Morley soils' filter field capability. The Blount group is unsuitable because of occasional high water tables, slow permeability, frost heave susceptibility, and high shrink-swell potential. Pewamo soils are unsuited to septic tanks.

Sanitary land fills: High clay content places a moderate limitation on the Morley group. Blount soils are moderately limited for sanitary land fill use, having, additionally, occasional high water tables, and Pewamo soils are unsuitable.

Highway and street location: Morley and Blount soils are moderately limited for this land use primarily because of frost heave susceptibility and high clay content. Other undesirable characteristics are slope in the Morley group and occasional high water tables associated with Blount soils. Pewamo soils are unsuitable.

Light and intensive recreation: With Morley soils, slope and slow permeability place slight to moderate restrictions on light recreation and moderate to severe limitations on intensive recreation. Blount soils are moderately limited by occasional high water tables and slow permeability. For recreational purposes, Pewamo soils are severely limited.

Intensive cropping: Slope and erosion hazard give Morley soils a slight to severe limitation rating. Blount soils are slightly limited by occasionally high water tables. If drained, Pewamo soils have only slight limitations for agriculture.

Susceptibility to frost heave makes this association a poor source of fill material.

Elliott-Markham-Pewamo Association

The Elliott-Markham-Pewamo Association lies in the southwest quarter of the Merrillville Study Area. (See Plate 3.) It is an upland association that occupies rather poorly drained flats, moderately well drained knolls and ridges, and poorly drained swales and drainageways. The soils developed on moderately fine textured glacial till. Their present use is primarily agricultural, for which they are well suited. The groups have the following limitations:

Building sites with public sewers: Elliott soils are moderately limited by occasional high water tables, frost heave susceptibility, and high shrink-swell potential. No particular characteristic restricts Markham soils, and they are generally suitable as building sites with public sewers. Pewamo soils, as discussed previously, are severely restricted for this use.

Building sites with septic tank filter fields: Soils in this association are poorly suited to homes with septic tanks. The Elliott group is limited by occasional high water tables, slow permeability, frost heave susceptibility, and high shrink-swell potential. Slow permeability restricts Markham soils and the Pewamo group is unsuitable.

Sanitary land fills: High clay content moderately restricts the Markham group as land fill sites and the Elliott soils are moderately restricted by high clay content and occasional high water tables. Pewamo soils are unsuitable.

Highway and street location: Occasional high water tables, susceptibility to frost heave, and high clay content, place moderate limitations on the Elliott group. Slope, high clay content and frost heave moderately limit the utility of Markham soils. Pewamo soils are severely limited for highway and road construction.

Light and intensive recreation: Elliott and Markham soil groups are moderately limited by occasional high water tables and slow permeability, and by slope and slow permeability, respectively. The Pewamo group has severely limited recreational potential.

Intensive cropping: All three groups have but slight limitations as agricultural soils. Pewamo soils, however, must be drained.

The association makes poor fill material because it is high in clay and susceptibility to frost heave.

Soil Capabilities[4]

Information about soil associations is of a general nature and the limitations discussed above cannot be extrapolated to specific sites within the Merrillville area. Detailed maps of soil series are available from the Soil Conservation Service. Each soil series is rated according to its limitations for various purposes. The limitations are considered "slight" if they are easily overcome, or if there are only small limitations. The term "moderate" means that limitations need to be recognized, but can be overcome with good management and careful design. "Severe" limitations are those which are sufficiently significant to make use questionable. Two aspects of the capability information which are especially important to community planning are the limitations for septic tank disposal fields and the limitations for foundations for low buildings.

Areas with soils having only slight limitations for septic tank disposal fields (see Plate 4) may be appropriate for low density residential development without the necessity

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(4) Source: Soil Survey of Lake County, Indiana, USDA Soil Conservation Service in Cooperation with Purdue University, Agricultural Experiment Station, July, 1972.

for sewer service. Within the Study Area, most of the sites suitable for septic tank use are within areas which should be preserved for their natural value or lightly developed for recreational use. Therefore, after other factors are considered, there are very few sites within the Study Area which would not require sewer service if residential units were permitted.

Areas with soils having severe limitations for foundations for low buildings (see Plate 5) are not practical sites for residential or other development. Soils may be unsuitable for foundations for a variety of reasons, such as high water table, high shrink-swell potential, instability when wet, or high compressibility. If buildings such as residences are built in areas with these severe limitations, problems with wet basements, cracking or settling foundations, and other difficulties, can be expected. Some of the limitations can be overcome by expensive and extensive modification of the topography or construction techniques. Frequently, however, the homeowner finds himself with unanticipated maintenance problems and property damage. Also, the town might be responsible for costly street and sidewalk repairs or damaged utilities in areas where development has occurred on unsuitable soils. Upkeep costs are high because the lifetime of most structural improvements is short, and because more elaborate construction is required.

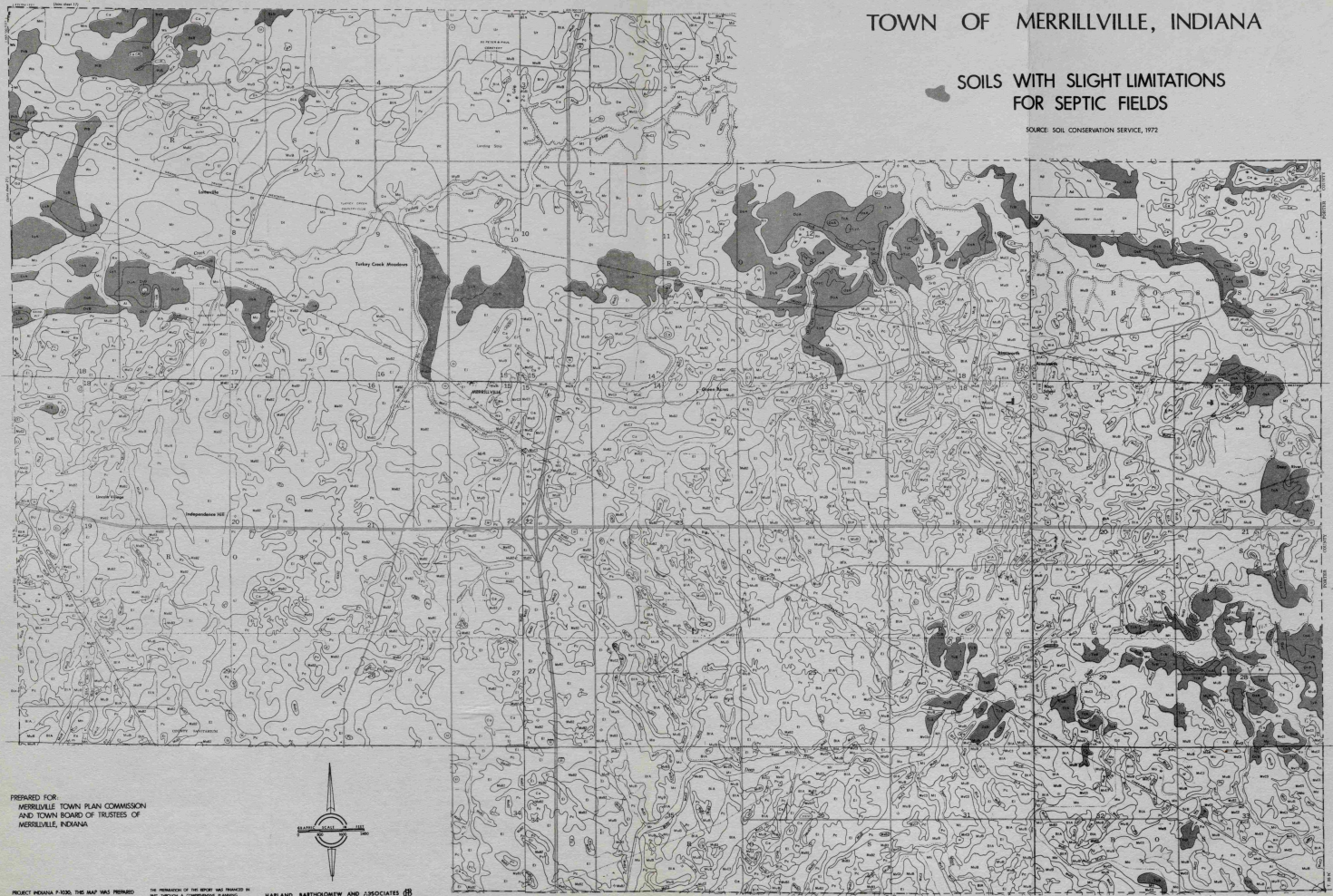
Areas without severe soil limitations for foundations have either slight or moderate limitations. These may be more easily overcome by reasonable construction techniques, and in an area such as Merrillville, where land values and pressures to urbanize are fairly high, small additional costs of construction and maintenance are justified.

Severe limitations exist on about half of the Study Area. Major concentrations of soils with severe limitations for foundations occur along Deep River closely interspersed with small patches of favorable soils. Other drainageways are also severely limited, as are several broad, poorly drained areas in the north part of the town. Several areas with severe limitations have already been developed and many of these experience problems with seasonal flooding and frequent standing water.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SOILS WITH SLIGHT LIMITATIONS FOR SEPTIC FIELDS

SOURCE: SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, 1972



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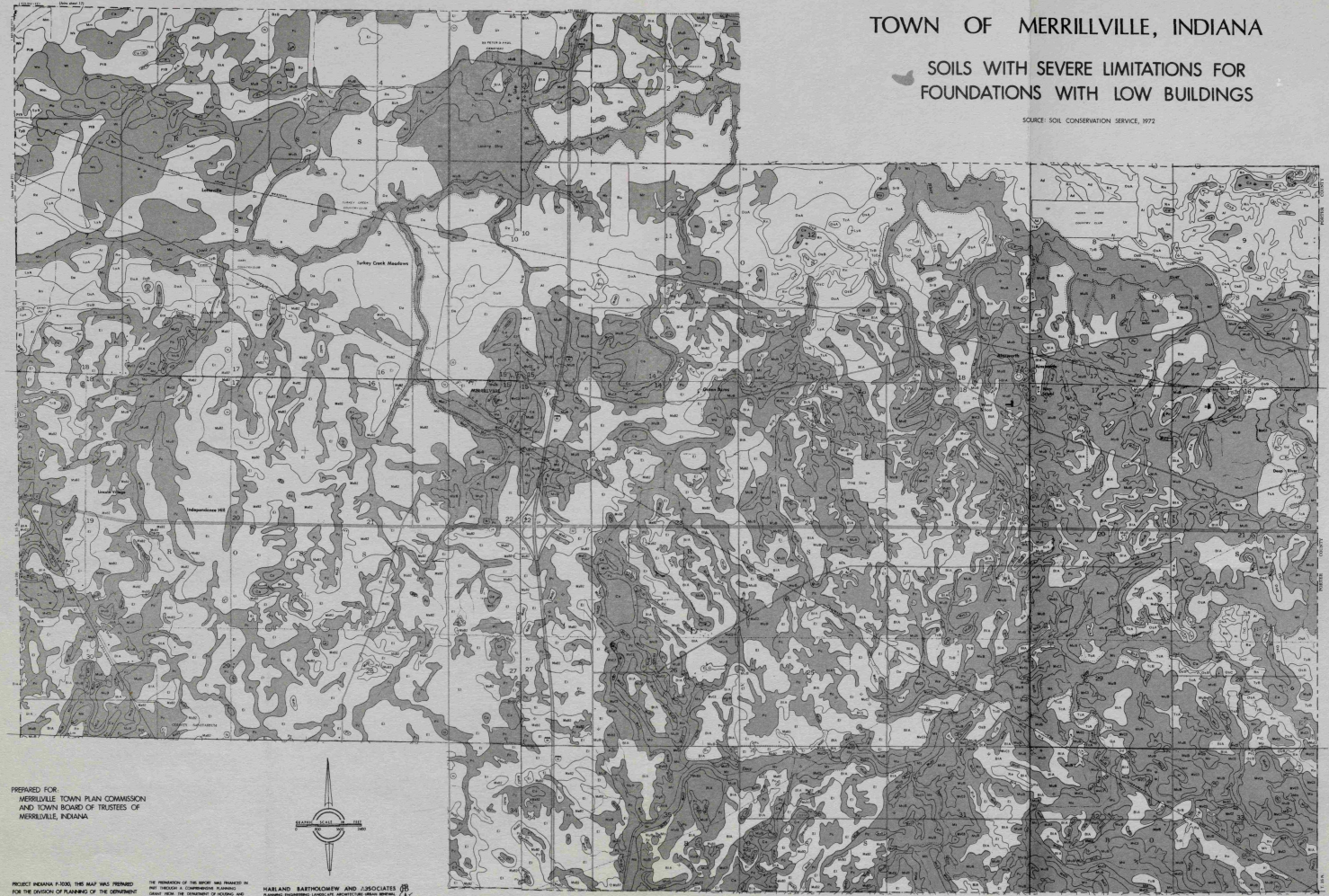
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 4

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SOILS WITH SEVERE LIMITATIONS FOR FOUNDATIONS WITH LOW BUILDINGS

SOURCE: SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, 1972



PREPARED FOR
MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

PROJECT INDIANA P-1030, THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR THE DIVISION OF PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 5

Hydrology

Groundwater Resources[5]

The four major water-yielding geologic units (aquifers) that can provide water supplies in the Merrillville area are:

1. The Cambrian Mt. Simon sandstone aquifer;

2. The Cambrian-Ordovician aquifer (primarily the Ironton-Galesville and Glenwood-St. Peter sandstones);

3. The shallow Middle Silurian dolomite or dolomitic limestone aquifers; and

4. The sand and gravel aquifers of the Pleistocene glacial drift.

Because their water lies deep below the surface and is often briny, the Cambrian and Ordovician formations are only a minor water supply source in Lake County.

Water occurs in the shallow Middle Silurian aquifers' interconnected joints, fractures and crevices. Although quality varies with location, sometimes exceeding the U.S. Public Health Service drinking-water standards for iron and sulfate content, water from these aquifers is used for domestic purposes, livestock and for a few public supplies.

The shallow Pleistocene glacial sand and gravel aquifers lie from a few feet to more than 250 feet below the surface, and are irregularly distributed. They are a major source of domestic, livestock and public water supply, although the water quality may vary from place to place. Some of the shallow aquifers are connected, and water moves freely from one to another. Their water comes principally from precipitation and surface water that moves slowly but steadily downward, constantly recharging the aquifers.

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(5) Sources: Water Resources Inventory, Lake-Porter County, Indiana. Regional Transportation and Planning Commission. 1970. Willman, H.B. 1971. Summary of the Geology of the Chicago Area. Circular 460, Illinois State Geological Survey. Department of Registration and Education.

Because of their relatively direct connection with the surface, the water in these sand and gravel lenses is subject to pollution and contamination.

The Middle Silurian and Pleistocene sand and gravel aquifers in the Merrillville area appear to contain sufficient water for domestic, livestock, public and some industrial use. They should, however, be protected against contamination from the surface.

Surface Water Resources[6]

The area's major streams are Deep River and Turkey Creek. (See Plate 6.) Lake George, to the northeast and outside the Study Area, is the nearest large impoundment. Marshy areas are present on both the flat Calumet Lacustrine Plain at the north of the Merrillville area, and in the Northern Lake and Moraine Region to the south, where they are found along streams and on the broad, flat upland divides.

Deep River, a tributary of the Little Calumet River, drains a major portion of Lake County. Its total drainage area is 139 square miles. It begins west of Crown Point, where it is called Beaver Dam Ditch, and where it has been straightened, channelized and dredged. Northeast of the Study Area, Deep River has been dammed, forming Lake George. Above Lake George, the river's average slope is 3.75 feet per mile, and it drains an area of gently rolling hills that is mostly used for agriculture. Excluding the portion called Beaver Dam Ditch and the portion below Lake George, Deep River is about 15 miles long. From a water management standpoint, its channel is too narrow and too shallow to contain floodwaters adequately. The channelized headwater stretch and its tributaries (Beaver Dam Ditch) is about 30 miles long and it, too, is inadequate to contain flood waters.

Turkey Creek is approximately 11 miles long, flowing generally east through the Study Area to join Deep River at the western end of Lake George. Its average slope is 3.20 feet per mile, and it drains an area of 39 square miles, most of which is low, flat land. The Water Resources Inventory, Lake-Porter County, Indiana, states that Turkey Creek's

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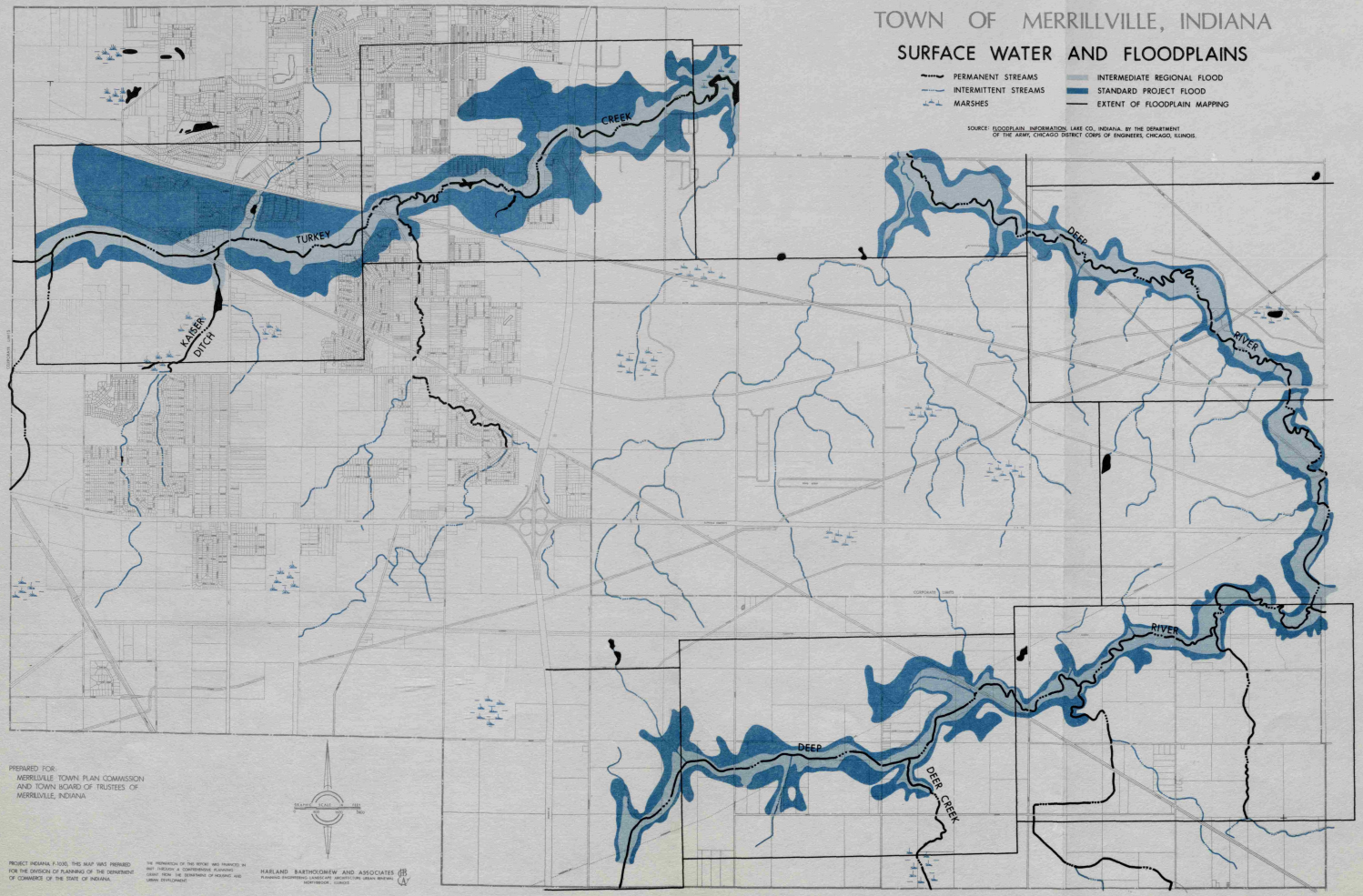
(6) Sources: Water Resources Inventory, Lake-Porter County, Indiana. Regional Transportation and Planning Commission, 1970. Corps of Engineers, Chicago District, 1973. Flood Plain Information, Deep River - Turkey Creek - Duck Creek. Lake County, Indiana.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SURFACE WATER AND FLOODPLAINS



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NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 6

major water management and flood control problem is that "original planning along, over, around and through the stream was poor" (p. VC2-11).

Flooding and Flood Control[7]

In the past 10 years, urban development has taken place along the floodplains of Turkey Creek and its tributaries, and this trend is expected to continue. Such developments reduce the area available for flood water storage and are themselves liable to damage.

During the May 1970 flood, high flow in Turkey Creek backed up water in two tributaries that enter the creek from the north and from the south, causing extensive flooding in Merrillville. Hobart and Crown Point suffered a great deal of flood damage when Deep River overflowed also, and the Hobart Dam at Lake George was overtopped.

The Corps of Engineers has mapped those areas along Turkey Creek and Deep River which would be inundated during two major floods, one greater than the other. (See Plate 6.) The lower Intermediate Regional Flood would occur once every hundred years, while the higher Standard Project Flood would be a much more rare event. Either, of course, could happen any time and may increase in frequency with increasing volumes of runoff due to expanding urban development. Flood elevation predictions suggest that urban and industrial development on the area's floodplains be severely restricted.

Flora and Fauna[8]

Merrillville is in the middle of an area which once had a complex and interesting flora. Habitats to the north in the Calumet Lacustrine Plain included extensive marshes, shallow lakes, slow moving rivers, sloughs, sand ridges, and even tamarack bogs. Habitats to the south on morainal

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(7) Source: Corps of Engineers, Chicago District, 1973. Flood Plain Information, Deep River - Turkey Creek - Duck Creek, Lake County, Indiana.

(8) Some of the historical information is derived from: H.S. Pepoon, 1927. An Annotated Flora of the Chicago Area. The Chicago Academy of Sciences, The Lakeside Press, R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company.

deposits included tall grass prairies, extremely rich oak forests, and occasional marshes. The Town of Merrillville is situated where the upland and lowland areas meet, and even today, small remnants of several of the original habitat types can be found in a semi-natural state. The maintenance of even a small degree of the area's original diversity, interest and natural beauty depends entirely upon the successful preservation of the remaining natural areas.

Forests

Forest trees are found in a few places in Merrillville. (See Plate 1.) Some of these areas are relatively undisturbed forest, but many have been partially cleared for subdivisions or are composed of very young trees on abandoned agricultural land. Most mature forests occur along the steep banks of streams where the land is clearly unsuitable for cultivation. Originally, the forests extended along all of the major water courses while the flat uplands were covered by tall grass prairie.

Oaks are the most common native trees in the Merrillville area, and probably six to eight different species are represented. The swamp white oak grows on sites usually too wet for other oaks. Bur oak and white oak are common throughout forested sites, and black oak usually dominates where the soil is sandy. Red oak, pin oak, shingle oak, and Hill's oak may be found in varying abundances. Other forest trees occurring naturally in the Study Area include shag-bark, bitternut and shell-bark hickories, butternuts, several maples, and hackberry.

Forested areas still support an abundance of wildlife, although many of the original inhabitants of the area, such as wolves and bears, disappeared long ago. The mammalian fauna of woodlands in or near Merrillville today probably includes deer, gray fox, raccoon, striped skunk, woodchuck, chipmunk, opossum, shrew and two or more species of bats, mice and squirrels. Along wooded streams, weasels and mink may also occur. A hundred or more species of birds probably utilize wooded areas near Merrillville during different periods of the year. Other fauna of the area may be locally abundant in good habitats, but is less well known.

Prairies

Natural prairie associations probably have been completely extirpated from Merrillville. Tall grass prairie once occupied much of the flat upland in the area, and some of the plant species typical of prairies persist as weeds on disturbed soils or in isolated patches. It is possible

that some plant communities that resemble the original prairie could be found. These would be most likely along railroad alignments where small sites have been spared frequent cultivation or other more serious disturbance.

Pasture and Old Field

Areas which have been cultivated and later abandoned undergo a series of changes in the vegetation known as old field succession which eventually stabilizes with the climax vegetation type typical of the region. In Merrillville, the climax vegetation type is the oak-hickory forest association. The early stages of old field succession are characterized by the predominance of grasses and broad leafed perennials. After a few years, shrubs become established, then small trees, and eventually trees typical of the climax forest association. The whole process takes about 200 years.

A good deal of cultivated land in Merrillville has been recently abandoned and is in the early stages of old field succession. In a few areas, the land is being used as pasture, and where it is heavily grazed, thorny shrubs such as blackberry, begin to predominate.

Many small animals utilize the old field habitat. The mammals of open fields present in Merrillville include moles, shrews, mice and rabbits; occasional weasels and red foxes; and possibly two species of ground squirrels. Several of the animals more typical of forests also are found in brushy and grassy areas. The old field habitat is especially important to wildlife where it borders woodlands and streams or even small cultivated areas.

Cultivated Land

Soils which were developed with tall grass prairie associations are usually exceptionally productive agricultural soils. In many areas, drainage has been improved to facilitate cultivation. Most of the productive farm land in Merrillville which is still cultivated is in the south-central part of the Town on the Elliot-Markham-Pewamo Soil Association. It would be worthwhile to retain some fairly large areas in agricultural production.

Marshes, Ponds, and Shallow Lakes

Marshes are among the world's most productive habitats and are of particular value to many species of wildlife. Many marshes have been drained so that the land could be cultivated or developed. Sometimes the unsuitability of marshy

areas for many of man's activities has served to protect them so that those which remain are frequently the least disturbed habitats on an urbanizing landscape. Numerous birds, including many migratory species, utilize marshes. Where streams or ponds are also present, muskrats may be common. Beavers may occasionally be found in or near Merrillville.

Vegetation in marshes is lush. Some areas may be covered almost entirely by cattails while seasonally wet sites may be dominated by sedges and rushes and some other plants formerly common to moist prairie associations. Submerged and floating aquatic plants are abundant in the shallow ponds and lakes of Merrillville. In some ways, this type of vegetation is considered a nuisance, but where pollution and oxygen depletion are not problems, aquatic plants support a wide variety of species of wildlife.

Ditches, Streams and Rivers

Because of the proximity of moraine deposits and the glacial lake plain, the drainage patterns in Merrillville are fairly complex. Many small tributary streams, usually of intermittent flow, drain the moraine region. Some of these have been channelized into small ditches, but often they have simply been incorporated into agricultural fields. The most extensive channelization in the area is along the upper reaches of the larger streams - Turkey Creek and Deep River.

Ditches are of little natural value and contribute to downstream flooding by increasing the rate of runoff. The ditches usually benefit adjacent agricultural land by removing excess water, but fertilizers, pesticides, and silt are often washed into the ditches and carried downstream to pollute other aquatic environments. Broad, uncultivated green belts along drainage canals and small tributaries can significantly help to reduce pollution from surface runoff, both agricultural and urban.

Some sections of Turkey Creek and Deep River have not been channelized and remain bordered by patches of the oak-hickory forest association which once typified river valleys in the area. The scarcity of residential and other development along the unchannelized portion of Deep River makes it an especially valuable natural resource.

Areas for Nature Preserves, Parks and Green Belts[9]

Nature Preserves

Some areas are of sufficient significance as natural habitats that they should be preserved for their intrinsic value. Such sites are rare in the Merrillville area and, therefore, are even more valuable. The natural areas in and near Merrillville are especially vulnerable to abuse because of their small size and intensifying development pressures. Even where a natural area is designated and in public ownership, inappropriate surrounding land uses can threaten its integrity. Almost any direct human use of a nature preserve also diminishes its natural value. Even recreational use should be restricted to low intensity activities such as bird watching. Improvements or facilities which might attract visitors should be prohibited, and management of the site should be minimal.

Beach Ridge - Marsh Area. The extreme northwestern corner of Merrillville is covered by a mixture of marsh and sandy ridges which were deposited by Glacial Lake Chicago. (See Plate 7.) In addition to marsh vegetation, the section includes oak forests on the drier spots, and some willow, cottonwood, elm, and other more water loving trees where the ground is fairly wet. The floristic diversity of the area is greater than that of most any other site of comparable size in Merrillville, and the area undoubtedly supports rich animal life as well. Extensive efforts should be made to protect this site as a natural area. This designation would exclude any sort of development, including even moderate recreational use, and any type of exploitation of the natural resources. Development along the north, west and south borders of the site should be phased out. The large-lot residential land use along the east edge can be accepted, but should not be expanded or intensified.

Merrillville Mire. A Marsh and woodland area immediately east of Merrillville at the corner of Mississippi Street and Old Lincoln Way is known as the Merrillville Mire and is a valuable natural resource. (See Plate 7.) Although less than

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(9) The area considered in this discussion includes the unincorporated land between Merrillville and Hobart, as well as the Town of Merrillville, since natural resource units do not necessarily follow political boundaries. This should not be construed as an attempt to influence decisions on areas outside the Town, but rather it is intended to show the extent of the resource unit.

a quarter of a square mile in extent, this is one of the largest marshes remaining in the area and is an important refuge for both migratory and resident bird populations, as well as other wildlife. The area has been cited as worthy of preservation by well known ecologists and by the Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission. The marsh, as well as all undeveloped land in the section north of Old Lincoln Way, should be included in a nature preserve. If possible, the preserve should eventually be extended northward to the railroad tracks and westward to the freeway. Merrillville should encourage the preservation of this natural area, and if the area can be brought under the jurisdiction of the Town, Merrillville should act immediately to insure the status of the Merrillville Mire as a nature preserve.

Parks for Medium Intensity Use

Several fairly large areas in Merrillville have a natural and scenic value significant enough to warrant their designation as parks. (See Plate 7.) Portions of these areas should remain in a natural state, but other areas can support moderately intensive recreational use such as picnicking, camping, hiking and fishing.

Some sites which had potential as regional parks have recently been developed. Although these areas can be the basis of attractive and expensive residential developments, they are sufficiently scarce in Merrillville that it is worthwhile to set aside remaining areas for public use and enjoyment. The presence of large natural areas and abundant recreational facilities will add to the desirability of the community as a whole.

Deep River Area. The majority of the land along the Deep River and its tributaries in the eastern part of Merrillville is suitable for a large, lightly developed park. Such a park combined with a system of smaller green belts could serve as the backbone of extensive, interconnected recreation facilities and scenic features for Merrillville.

Southwest Corner Area. A small portion of the extreme southwest corner of Merrillville, plus similar land adjacent to the Town, could serve as the basis of a regional park. A mixture of woodland and marsh provides good wildlife habitat, while some existing cultivated areas could be converted to playing fields and other recreational facilities.

Eighty-Ninth Avenue Site. A park about one-half square mile in size bordering 89th Avenue in south central Merrillville would provide recreational facilities in an area which

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESOURCE PRESERVATION

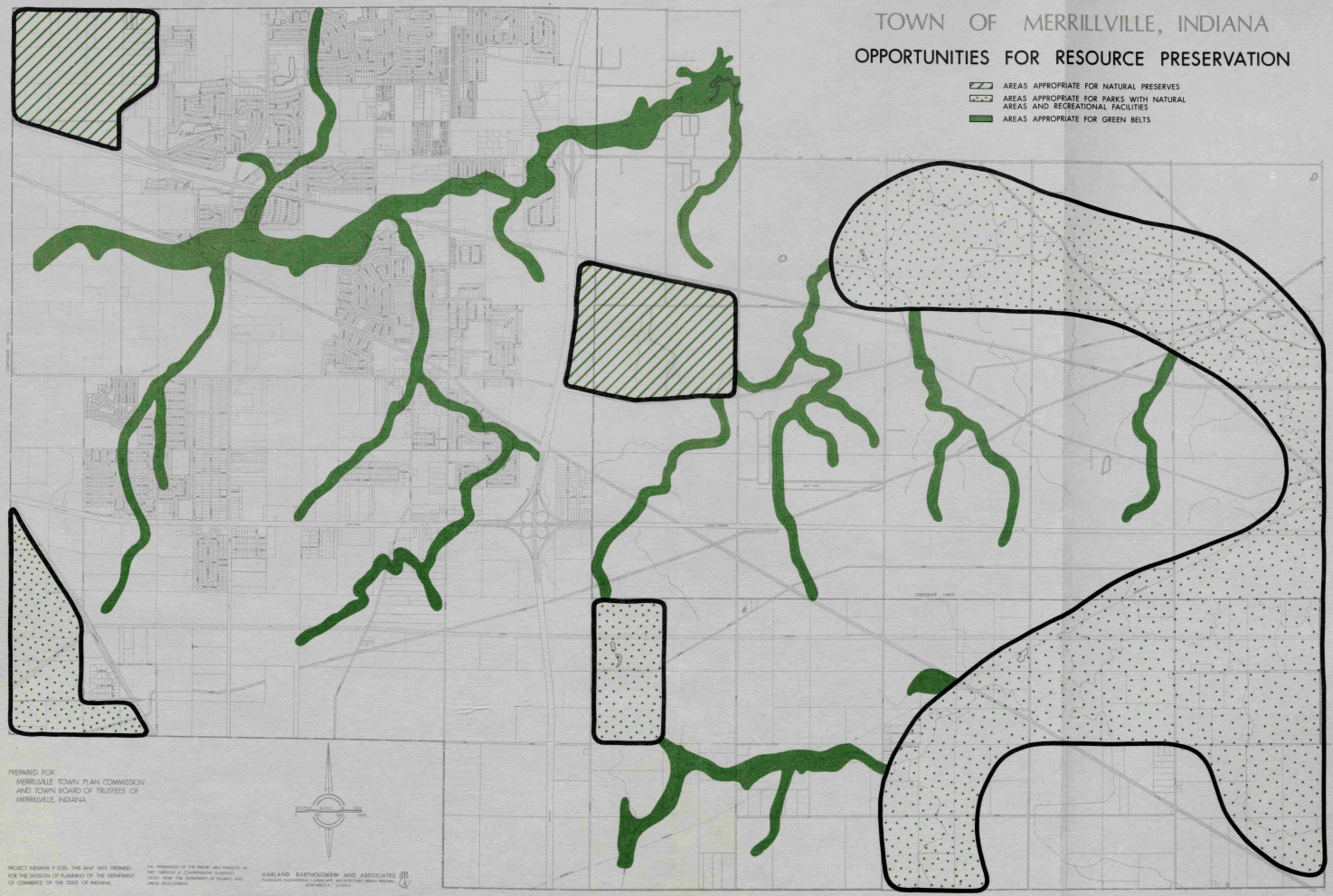
AREAS APPROPRIATE FOR NATURAL PRESERVES
AREAS APPROPRIATE FOR PARKS WITH NATURAL AREAS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
AREAS APPROPRIATE FOR GREEN BELTS
CORPORATE LIMITS

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PLATE 7

will be developing rapidly. The site includes a nice hill, ponds, a stream and a few small patches of woods.

Green Belts and Urban Parks

Most of the water courses in Merrillville could be used as the basis for a system of green belts and related intensively used parks that would improve the quality of the expanding urban development. (See Plate 6.) Some residential areas already have been designed to take scenic advantage of small streams. This practice should be encouraged and improved upon along with the incorporation of large open spaces and parks into residential development.

Broad green belts bordering streams will help to reduce flood damage and water pollution and can serve as scenic right-of-ways for bicycle and pedestrian paths. Some connectors between stream-side green belts can be used to improve circulation and accessibility of parks, schools, and other public places. (See Plate 7.)

LAND USE

In the past, the pattern of city development was largely determined by the topography of the site, water areas, the sometime haphazard location of commercial and industrial centers, and the activities of real estate developers. Because of this lack of direction, some areas unsuitable for any urban land use have been developed, other areas are unduly congested, while still other sections are so sparsely settled that public facilities and services can only be supplied at great expense.

Principles

The purpose of the Land Use Plan is to guide future development so that an efficient and desirable community pattern results. This includes the relationships which occur between land use areas and the effectiveness of the major streets to provide good transportation routes throughout the community.

Residential Neighborhoods

The community's residential areas should be organized into neighborhood units. These neighborhood units should be bounded by major streets and each neighborhood should contain generally between 2,500 and 5,000 persons, centered upon an elementary school and neighborhood park. Neighborhood shopping facilities should be provided at major street intersections. Traffic arteries should go around and not through the neighborhoods.

Commercial Areas

There are three general types of commercial centers, the largest of which is the regional center, which contains the community's major shopping facilities, professional and governmental offices, and public buildings. The second type of commercial use is the neighborhood commercial area serving the convenience needs of residential areas. Such facilities preferably should be grouped together into shopping centers providing ample parking areas and interfering as little as possible with adjacent residential uses. The third type of commercial use is the general highway commercial area including automotive-oriented establishments such as motels, filling stations, restaurants, etc., catering to both local and transient business.

Industrial Areas

The location of transportation facilities, such as the railroads and major highways, will influence industrial locations. Modern industries need large areas for their one-level operations, for adequate off-street parking, and for future expansion. Many industrial processes have been improved and emission of smoke, gas, dust and noise have been eliminated or greatly reduced, so that they are not as objectionable as they were some years ago. The Land Use Plan should provide for industrial sites which are adequate in area, have convenient access and pleasant surroundings.

Public and Semi-Public Uses and Park Areas

Scenic areas within the community, and particularly substantial parts of streams and the river, should be preserved and enhanced as part of the park system. Neighborhood parks should be developed in conjunction with elementary schools. Public and semi-public uses such as churches, institutions, clubs and golf courses provide the community with necessary open spaces.

Character and Analysis of Existing Development

Existing development in Merrillville forms a non-contiguous pattern, divided into several district parts. This pattern of development is related to the three separate unincorporated communities which were incorporated into the Town of Merrillville: Lottaville, Merrillville and Independence Hill. Lottaville generally included that area along Taft School and north of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad; Merrillville was generally that area along Broadway Street between the Grand Trunk Western Railroad and U.S. Route 30; and Independence Hill was that area along Taft Street between the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and U.S. Route 30.

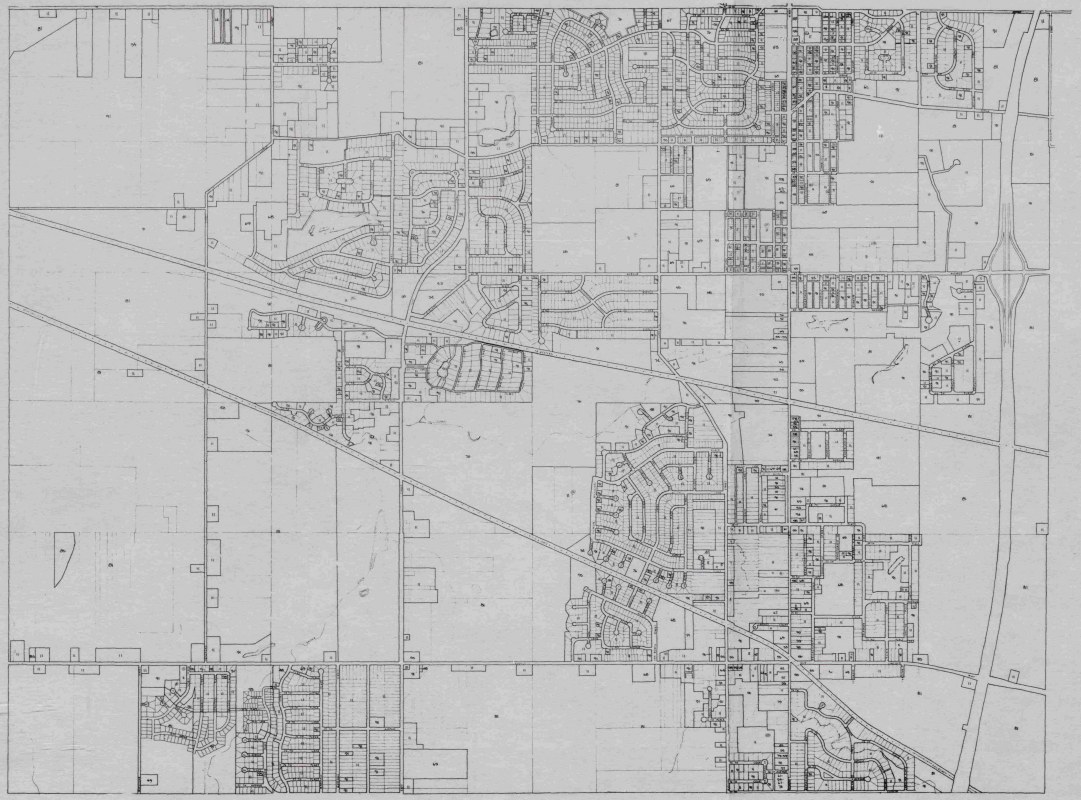
The general character of development in the Town of Merrillville reflects the predominantly single-family residential uses, north of U.S. Route 30, concentrated in the three district community areas. Land uses along Broadway Street are a mixture of residential and commercial uses. South of U.S. Route 30, the pattern of development is characterized by linear development along the County and Township roads and vast amounts of vacant or agricultural land. (See Plates 8 and 9.)

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA
SECTION A

LAND USE 1974

CATEGORY	CODE	CATEGORY
RESIDENTIAL	11	HOUSEHOLD UNITS
	12	GROUP QUARTERS
	14	MOBILE HOME PARKS OR COURTS
	15	TRANSIENT LODGINGS
MANUFACTURING	21	FOOD AND KINDRED PRODUCTS-MANUFACTURING
	34	FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS-MANUFACTURING
	39	MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURING, NEC*
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITIES	43	RAILROAD, RAPID RAIL TRANSIT, AND STREET RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION
	45	HIGHWAY AND STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY
	48	UTILITIES
TRADE	51	WHOLESALE TRADE
	52	RETAIL TRADE-BUILDING MATERIALS, HARDWARE, AND FARM EQUIPMENT
	53	RETAIL TRADE-GENERAL MERCHANDISE
	54	RETAIL TRADE-FOOD
	55	RETAIL TRADE-AUTOMOTIVE, MARINE CRAFT, AIRCRAFT, AND ACCESSORIES
	56	RETAIL TRADE-APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES
	57	RETAIL TRADE-FURNITURE, HOME FURNISHINGS, AND EQUIPMENT
	58	RETAIL TRADE-EATING AND DRINKING
	59	OTHER RETAIL TRADE, NEC*
SERVICES	61	FINANCE, INSURANCE, AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES
	62	PERSONAL SERVICES
	63	BUSINESS SERVICES
	64	REPAIR SERVICES
	65	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
	66	CONTRACT CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
	67	GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES
	68	EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
	69	MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES
CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATIONAL	71	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND NATURE EXHIBITIONS
	72	PUBLIC ASSEMBLY
	73	AMUSEMENTS
	74	RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
	76	PARKS
	79	OTHER CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATIONAL, NEC*
RESOURCE PRODUCTION		
RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND EXTRACTION	81	AGRICULTURE
	82	AGRICULTURAL RELATED ACTIVITIES
	83	FORESTRY ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
	85	MINING ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
UNDEVELOPED LAND AND WATER AREAS	91	UNDEVELOPED AND UNUSED LAND AREA (EXCLUDING NONCOMMERCIAL FOREST DEVELOPMENT)
	94	VACANT FLOOR AREA
	95	UNDER CONSTRUCTION

*NEC - NOT ELSEWHERE CODED.
SOURCE: HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES SURVEY, JUNE, 1974.



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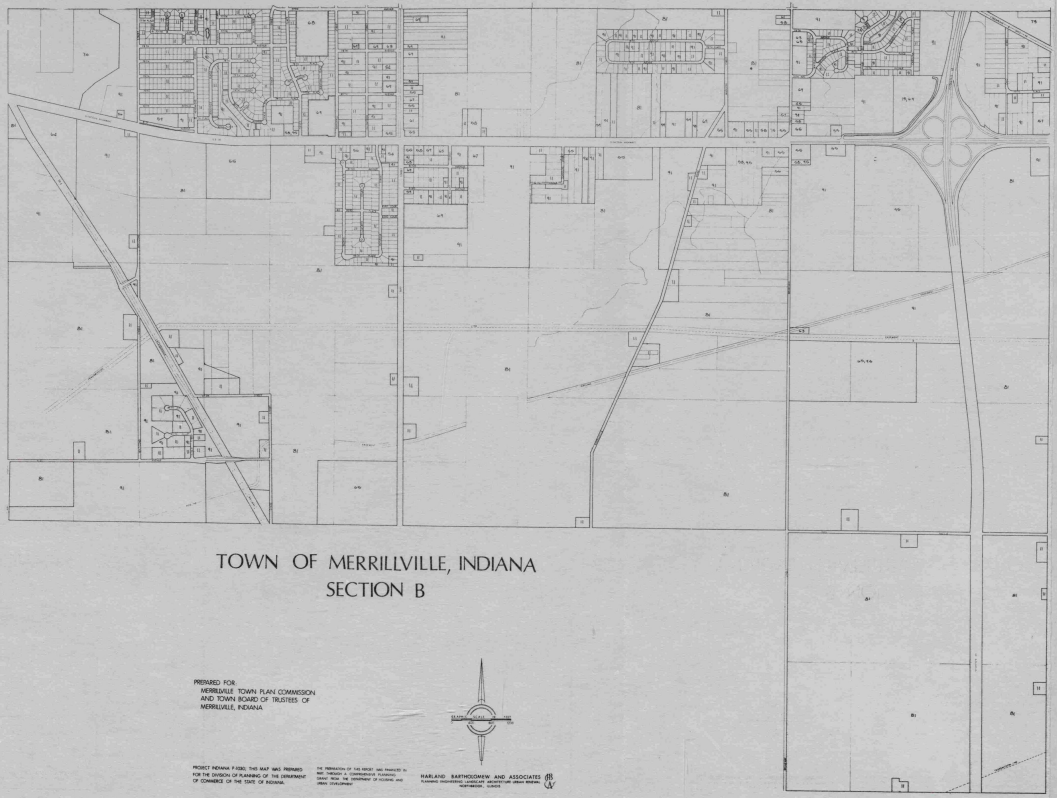
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 8



TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA
SECTION B

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NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

LAND USE 1974

CATEGORY	CODE	CATEGORY
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	12	GROUP QUARTERS
	14	MOBILE HOME PARKS OR COURTS
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MANUFACTURING	21	FOOD AND KINDRED PRODUCTS-MANUFACTURING
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RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND EXTRACTION	81	AGRICULTURE
	82	AGRICULTURAL RELATED ACTIVITIES
	83	FORESTRY ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
	85	MINING ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
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	94	VACANT FLOOR AREA
	95	UNDER CONSTRUCTION

*NEC - NOT ELSEWHERE CODED.
SOURCE: HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES SURVEY, JUNE, 1974.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA
SECTION C

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MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA.

PROJECT INDIANA P-6330, THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR THE DIVISION OF PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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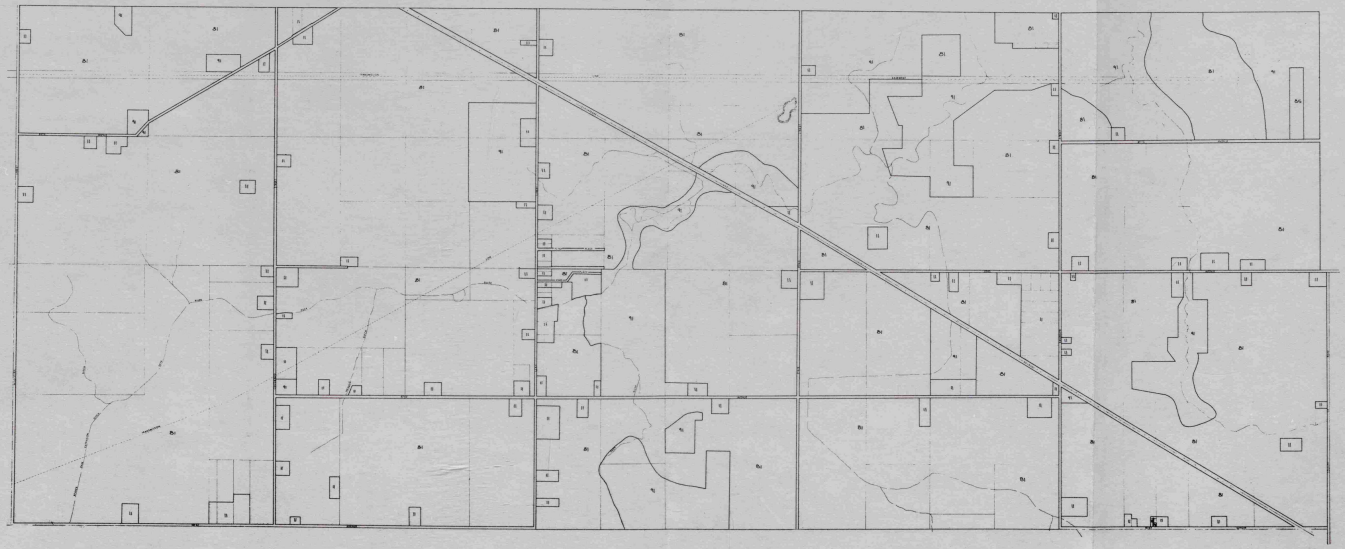
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHWEST, ILLINOIS

LAND USE 1974

CATEGORY	CODE	CATEGORY
RESIDENTIAL	11	HOUSEHOLD UNITS
	12	GROUP QUARTERS
	14	MOBILE HOME PARKS OR COURTS
	15	TRANSIENT LODGINGS
MANUFACTURING	21	FOOD AND KINDRED PRODUCTS-MANUFACTURING
	34	FABRICATED METAL PRODUCTS-MANUFACTURING
	39	MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURING, NEC*
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, AND UTILITIES	41	RAILROAD, RAPID RAIL TRANSIT, AND STREET RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION
	45	HIGHWAY AND STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY
	48	UTILITIES
TRADE	51	WHOLESALE TRADE
	52	RETAIL TRADE-BUILDING MATERIALS, HARDWARE, AND FARM EQUIPMENT
	53	RETAIL TRADE-GENERAL MERCHANDISE
	54	RETAIL TRADE-FOOD
	55	RETAIL TRADE-AUTOMOTIVE, MARINE CRAFT, AIRCRAFT, AND ACCESSORIES
	56	RETAIL TRADE-APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES
	57	RETAIL TRADE-FURNITURE, HOME FURNISHINGS, AND EQUIPMENT
	58	RETAIL TRADE-EATING AND DRINKING
	59	OTHER RETAIL TRADE, NEC*
SERVICES	61	FINANCE, INSURANCE, AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES
	62	PERSONAL SERVICES
	63	BUSINESS SERVICES
	64	REPAIR SERVICES
	65	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
	66	CONTRACT CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
	67	GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES
	68	EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
	69	MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES
CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATIONAL	71	CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND NATURE EXHIBITIONS
	72	PUBLIC ASSEMBLY
	73	AMUSEMENTS
	74	RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
	76	PARKS
	79	OTHER CULTURAL, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATIONAL, NEC*
RESOURCE PRODUCTION		
RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND EXTRACTION	81	AGRICULTURE
	82	AGRICULTURAL RELATED ACTIVITIES
	83	FORESTRY ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
	85	MINING ACTIVITIES AND RELATED SERVICES
UNDEVELOPED LAND AND WATER AREAS	91	UNDEVELOPED AND UNUSED LAND AREA (EXCLUDING NONCOMMERCIAL FOREST DEVELOPMENT)
	94	VACANT FLOOR AREA
	95	UNDER CONSTRUCTION

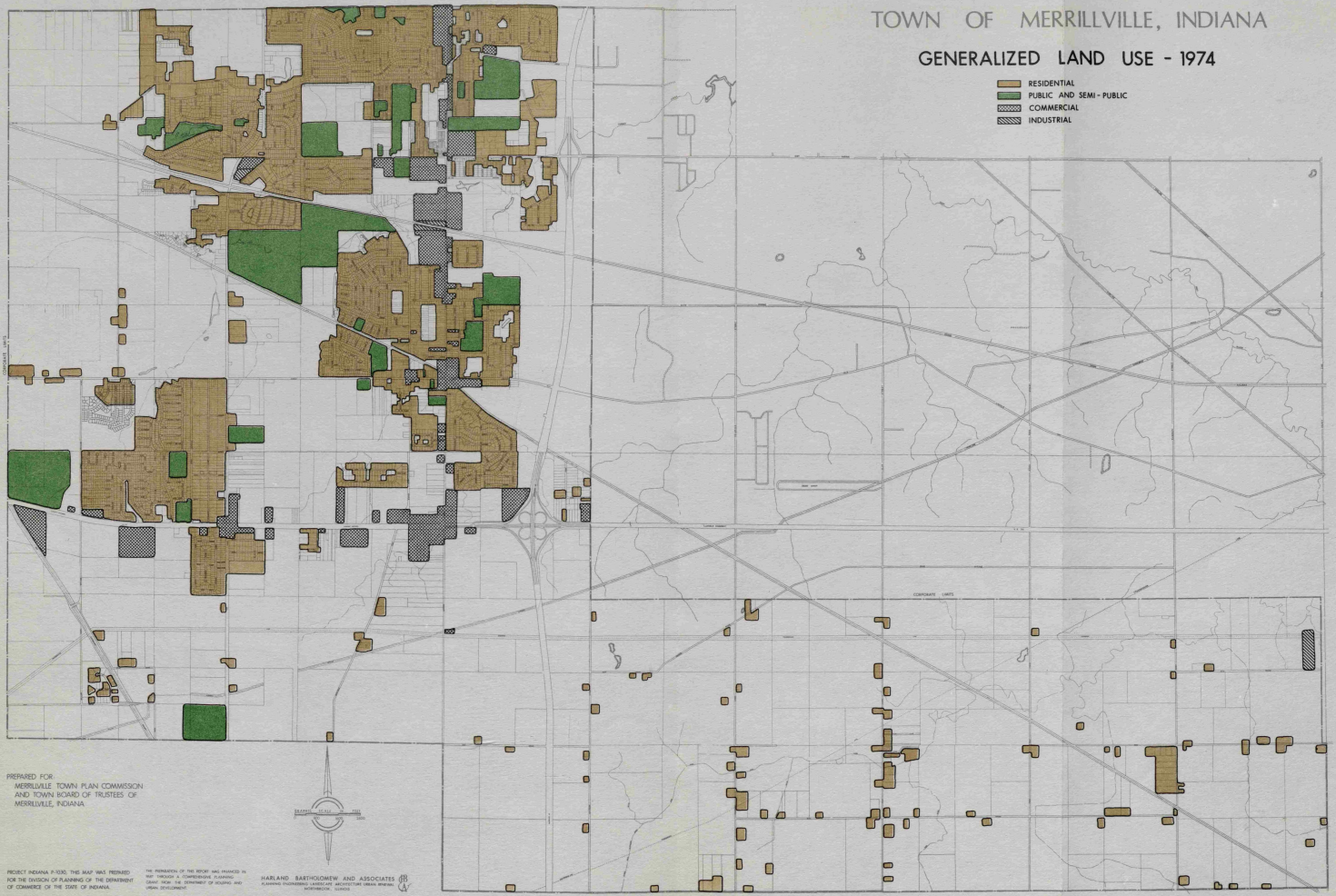
*NEC - NOT ELSEWHERE CODED
SOURCE: HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES SURVEY, JUNE, 1974.



TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

GENERALIZED LAND USE - 1974

- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC AND SEMI - PUBLIC
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL



PREPARED FOR
MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
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PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 9

Residential Uses

Residential land in Merrillville is devoted primarily to single-family uses. Ninety-five percent of all the land used for residential purposes is located north of U.S. Route 30. Most of the homes in the single-family residential areas were constructed in the last 20 years and, as such, are generally attractive and well maintained. There is a certain homogeneity of lot sizes and building types throughout the newer subdivisions. The only area where large lot estate-type homes exist is along 57th Avenue in the northwest portion of Town. The development pattern provides little continuity between the residential areas.

Multiple-family residential use areas are limited in both size and location. All of the multiple-family uses in Merrillville are located north of 77th Avenue. The only apparent pattern of development of multiple-family uses is that the smaller parcels which have been zoned for apartments or two-family use are either located along or in close proximity to Broadway Street.

Commercial Uses

Commercial uses account for only 1.9 percent of the total land area (386.8 acres) and are generally confined to strip development along Broadway Street, scattered strip development along U.S. Route 30, and at major intersections throughout Merrillville. (See Table 1.) As a result, Merrillville does not have a defined central business area. Most of the commercial uses in the town are general highway commercial establishments, including automotive oriented establishments. There are three neighborhood commercial centers located along Broadway Street which have grouped a number of commercial establishments and provide large off-street parking areas. A fourth neighborhood commercial center is under construction on the southwest corner of Broadway Street and U.S. Route 30. A regional shopping center, South Lake Mall, is under construction east of Mississippi Street and south of U.S. Route 30 in unincorporated Ross Township.

Generally, the strip commercial development along Broadway Street presents a serious land use problem. Strip commercial development is generally unattractive in terms of signs, lighting and, occasionally, architecture. The strip commercial establishments tend to lower the level of service of the thoroughfares along which they are located,

Table 1

LAND USE 1974

Merrillville, Indiana

Category	Code	Category	Area (in acres)
Residential	11	Household Units	2,417.4
	12	Group Quarters	46.1
	14	Mobile Home Parks or Courts	3.3
	15	Transient Lodgings	9.6
Manufacturing	21	Food and Kindred Products-Manufacturing	5.3
	34	Fabricated Metal Products-Manufacturing	19.3
	39	Miscellaneous Manufacturing, NEC*	3.5
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	41	Railroad, Rapid Rail Transit, and Street Railway Transportation	184.0
	45	Highway and Street Right-of-Way	1,228.9
	48	Utilities	4.1
Trade	51	Wholesale Trade	8.4
	52	Retail Trade-Building Materials, Hardware, and Park Equipment	17.4
	53	Retail Trade-General Merchandise	70.7
	54	Retail Trade-Food	2.4
	55	Retail Trade-Automotive, Marine Craft, Aircraft, and Accessories	96.9
	56	Retail Trade-Apparel and Accessories	4.5
	57	Retail Trade-Furniture, Home Furnishings, and Equipment	8.2
	58	Retail Trade-Eating and Drinking	15.8
	59	Other Retail Trade,NEC*	30.7

* NEC - Not Elsewhere Coded.

Table 1: LAND USE 1974 (Continued)

Category	Code	Category	Area (in acres)
Services	61	Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate Services	11.4
	62	Personal Services	3.4
	63	Business Services	5.7
	64	Repair Services	25.2
	65	Professional Services	86.1
	67	Governmental Services	10.9
	68	Educational Services	156.4
	69	Miscellaneous Services	115.5
Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreational	71	Cultural Activities and Nature Exhibitions	.5
	72	Public Assembly	3.2
	73	Amusements	10.0
	74	Recreational Activities	337.9
	76	Parks	101.9
	79	Other Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreational, NEC*	4.7
Resource Production and Extraction	81	Agriculture	10,857.8
	82	Agricultural Related Activities	1.3
	83	Forestry Activities and Related Services	1.3
	85	Mining Activities and Related Services	16.5
Undeveloped Land and Water Areas	91	Undeveloped and Unused Land Area (Excluding Noncommercial Forest Development)	3,514.8
	94	Vacant Floor Area	5.9
	95	Under Construction	205.1

* NEC - Not Elsewhere Coded.

Source: Harland Bartholomew and Associates Survey, June 1974.

due in part to the many separate turning movement locations. Off-street parking must be provided for each individual establishment which creates many small parking lots and probably much more parking area than would be needed if the stores were grouped together into shopping centers. Perhaps the most serious problem with strip commercial development is containing it once it has started, since there are no clearly defined limits related to the adjacent uses.

Industrial Uses

Industrial uses, including extractive activities, account for only 44.6 acres (.2 percent) of the total land area in Merrillville. Of this 44.6 acre total, extractive activities account for 16.5 acres which means that only 28.1 acres of land are used for industrial uses. Of this 28.1 acres of industrial uses, approximately 10 acres are occupied by an automobile salvage operation, which leaves less than 20 acres of land that is devoted to manufacturing (primarily durable and food and kindred products). This small amount of land occupied by industrial uses reinforces the view that Merrillville's role in the economic spectrum of the metropolitan area is that of a bedroom community, with most residents employed outside of Merrillville.

Those few industrial uses which are located in Merrillville are scattered in several locations in the Town, but generally north of U.S. Route 30. The previously mentioned automobile salvage operation and a ready-mix concrete plant are probably the least compatible with other uses. The salvage operation is located in a mixed use area along Broadway Street and, as such, does not directly affect any residential areas. The ready-mix concrete plant, however, is not located in a mixed use area and does abut an adjacent residential area. Sound levels of machinery and materials trucks, along with truck traffic, may have an affect on the adjacent residential uses and should probably be removed at sometime in the future.

Other Uses

Vacant and agricultural land uses account for 14,509 acres, or about 73 percent of the total area of Merrillville. About 95 percent of the land south of U.S. Route 30 is either vacant or in agricultural use. The future use of this vast amount of existing agricultural and vacant land will have a significant impact on the development of the Town of Merrillville.

Parks and recreation areas account for only two percent of the land area in Merrillville (455 acres). Of this amount, about 340 acres are devoted to the three golf courses in Merrillville; about 15 acres are devoted to amusements and other recreational activities; and only 67 acres are devoted to parks. Of the 67 acres of land occupied by parks, none is publicly owned.

Land Use Problems

The existing land use pattern poses several major problems:

1. The strip commercial development along Broadway Street;

2. Lack of a dominant commercial center in the community;

3. Lack of light industrial areas with spacious open sites;

4. East-west continuity of thoroughfare system; and

5. Inadequate park and recreation areas.

Solutions to the above land use problems, as well as solutions to other problems identified in the course of the study, will be suggested in the Land Use Plan undertaken in Phase II. Adoption of the Land Use Plan and policies by the Town, and establishment and enforcement of programs and regulations to implement the plans, will be an important first step in correcting the problems identified herein.

HOUSING

Housing Conditions

The physical condition of housing in Merrillville is quite good, with only a few areas showing any physical deterioration. Merrillville is a relatively new community and much of the housing is less than five years old. Another factor contributing to the general soundness of the housing stock is the high degree of home ownership evidenced in the Merrillville area. In 1970, the U.S. Census indicated a home ownership rate of 89.2 percent. (See Table 2.) While the census unit of Lottaville, Rexville and Merrillville did not incorporate the entire boundaries which are today the city, it did include much of the residential development.

The few housing condition problems that exist in Merrillville fall into two categories: (1) A small number of older housing units built prior to the recent suburban development and which require substantial maintenance. These few dwellings are scattered, rather than in a concentrated pattern. (2) Minor maintenance problems. The majority of housing problems that exist are in this second category.

Since the housing is almost entirely new and the only real identifiable problem is one of minor maintenance, no tabulation of condition of structures was made.

Housing Types

The land use survey conducted by the City of Merrillville and Harland Bartholomew and Associates in 1974 identified 6,567 single-family homes within the corporate limits. The 1970 census indicated a median value of $24,300 per unit. However, considering inflation and new construction, local realtors feel that most single-family homes being built are in the $30,000 to $50,000 price range - so that the median value of housing in Merrillville has increased within the past five years and existing housing has increased in market value. Many of the homes which fall in the lower end of the value scale are homes that were built before the recent surge of growth, which has contributed to rising land prices and produced a demand for higher priced homes in Merrillville. Much of the popularity of housing in the Town can, of course, be directly attributed to inmigration from the Gary Metropolitan Area. The relatively attractive and less polluted atmosphere of Merrillville,

Table 2

SELECTED HOUSING DATA FOR
MERRILLVILLE-LOTTAVILLE-REXVILLE AREA
1970

All Housing Units	4,337
Total Population	15,918
Population per Occupied Unit	3.7
Owner Occupied	3.9
Renter Occupied	2.5
Percentage of Units Owner Occupied	89.2%
Percentage of Units Renter Occupied	10.8%
Vacant Units	1.3%

Value of Owner Occupied Housing:

Less than $10,000	1.0%
$10,000 - $19,999	25.0%
$20,000 - $34,999	62.3%
$35,000 - $49,999	9.5%
$50,000 and Over	2.2%
	100.0%

Median - $24,300

Contract Rent of Renter Occupied Units:

Less than $100	14.7%
$100 - $149	35.9%
$150 - $199	37.4%
$200 and Over	3.0%
Non-Cash	9.0%
	100.0%

Median - $144

Source: U. S. Census - 1970

combined with the availability of land and easy access to the employment centers around Gary, have all contributed to the rapid growth of the community in the last ten years. As might be expected, housing and land have become prime commodities of Merrillville.

Multiple-family development has also enjoyed some popularity in recent years, and the 1974 survey identified 1,253 units, along with 32 two-family units. However, local realtors indicate that this market may be fairly well saturated, particularly in the upper price ranges. Less expensive units have a market in some elements of the Gary outmigration and some young members of the community. Merrillville, however, is primarily a community of established families, as indicated by the median number of 3.9 persons per homeowner dwelling unit. Rental occupancy comprises a little over 10 percent of the population, with a median occupancy of 2.5 persons per unit. While additional multiple-family construction will continue to take place, the ratio of single to multiple-family units will probably remain fairly constant within the near future. The factors which will affect the balance are the mortgage and interest rates, land prices, and the future pattern of employment centers and commuting.

Housing Issues

The primary housing issues in Merrillville are: (1) the preservation and enhancement of the existing housing stock, and (2) encouraging high-quality future residential development.

Housing Preservation

It is evident that few real problems of deterioration currently exist in Merrillville. There are scattered areas of older and sometimes ill-kept housing, but they are small areas fairly well dispersed and, therefore, have low visibility. However, without proper care, any neighborhood - even a new one - can become physically deteriorated. This is particularly true of neighborhoods with modest homes, few amenities, or with conflicting uses of land.

Preserving the existing housing stock requires both public and private cooperation. One element in the preservation of neighborhoods is the extent of home ownership. In this respect, Merrillville has a major advantage - with the high home ownership pattern. Another element is the original quality of residential structures. Poor construction material and workmanship contribute to the rapid aging of homes. Fortunately, the majority of houses in Merrillville

are well constructed of good quality material. Less than one percent of all housing units in the community lack any or all plumbing facilities. Still another factor is overcrowding. Although the median persons per dwelling unit is reasonably high, this is not presently a problem in Merrillville. Finally, the presence of conflicting land uses in a residential neighborhood can also affect the preservation of that neighborhood. In the older areas of the town, this situation is sometimes present. When the intrusion dominates the character of the area and there is little chance of reversing it, then consideration should be given to removing the residential structures as they become physically deteriorated.

A housing policy should be established by the City of Merrillville to guide the preservation, enhancement and future growth of residential resources. This housing policy should reflect community values in terms of housing quality. The housing policy need not be complex or cumbersome, but a clear-cut statement of the community's housing goals and the means to accomplish the goals. Preservation of housing quality by continuous maintenance and upkeep of individual properties is an example of one such goal that the town will want to consider as a part of its housing policy.

Housing Development Guidance

There are several factors affecting the quality of future development. The first is the proper allocation of land from the standpoint of both ecology and orderly development. The overall amenities of residential living are improved if areas of ecological significance are protected rather than destroyed. For example, the retention of tree cover and natural streams benefits the entire community, and is reflected by the property values of surrounding residential development. In the long term, it is wiser policy to build less homes with more natural amenities than more homes with less. This is particularly true in Merrillville, where many live as a respite from the congestion and pollution of the Gary-Hammond Metropolitan Area.

A second factor affecting future residential growth is the relationship of supply and demand. Because much of the housing in Merrillville is new, the housing market is somewhat one-sided - supplying the family demand. However, as the community ages, other markets must be considered, specifically the young and the elderly - both of whom have similar housing preferences. The housing policy for Merrillville should encourage well-balanced development to serve persons of all ages, recognizing them as valuable resources to Merrillville. Also, the wave of outmigration from the Gary area, which created the current demand for housing, may well bypass

Merrillville in the next five years - resulting in a definite slow-down in the general housing market. This should mark the beginning of the "settling" of Merrillville, stabilizing supply and demand within the community as opposed to relying on demand from the outside.

One of the most critical factors affecting future development will be the availability of public facilities and community services. The current moratorium on multiple-family development reflects the difficulties of supplying rapid growth with the necessary utilities. Most definitely, a goal of the housing policy should be the assurance of water and sewer capacity prior to construction of either single or multiple-family development. Recreational and educational community facilities should also be coordinated with residential development. Schools and parks are primary amenities which attract new residents to a community, improve property values, or stabilize and provide the existing population with a source of pride. This pride is generally reflected in the upkeep of their homes. Consequently, an important statement of the housing policy should be the recognition that housing and community facilities are interrelated and mutually supportive, and that the well-being of one is directly related to the other.

A related factor affecting both future development and current housing conditions is the social and economic health of the community. As many new residents of Merrillville are acutely aware, a community plagued by crime, racial fears and social disorder is not a comfortable place to live. It is generally these occurrences which prompt people to leave a community. Although Merrillville is located close to a major metropolitan area in which such elements exist, it is not inevitable that they permeate Merrillville also. A healthy social atmosphere is most definitely the concern of city officials, and enlightened municipal leadership can do much to preserve both a physical and social tranquility in Merrillville. From the standpoint of housing, this is most important. Likewise, the economic well-being of the community is important to the preservation of existing housing and the future growth of residential development. Economically and socially depressed areas generally show the stress first on housing and physical appearance. It is important for Merrillville to avoid this, and thus maintain both an attractive and marketable housing supply.

Conclusions

The preceding analysis of housing conditions, housing types and housing issues outlines the general opportunities and problems facing Merrillville in the housing sector. As a relatively new community, with the majority of housing

built very recently, Merrillville should concentrate on housing preservation and development guidance during the planning period. The community should prepare a housing policy to direct and accomplish these functions and dealing with the environmental, social and economic aspects related to housing. In addition, the large amount of new housing yet to be developed provides the Town with the opportunity to encourage housing of all types and for varying groups - from the elderly to the young marrieds - and serving all the various income levels of the community.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Adequate transportation facilities are essential to the social and economic development of any community. The safe, efficient and economic movement of people and goods into and within a community has always been a major development objective of urban areas.

Major Thoroughfares

One of the most important elements in the physical structure of any community is its street system. The great majority of all the movements of people and goods within an urban community today are accomplished by means of vehicles operating over the public streets. The proper location, design and maintenance of highways connecting the community with other parts of the country; of major thoroughfares interconnecting the different parts of the urban area with each other and with these highways; and of the complex of minor streets providing access to abutting property, has come to be one of the most important functions of our state and local governments. The proper function of both the urban and rural components of a community's thoroughfare system is directly related to the efficient accommodation of automobile and truck traffic.

Experience in many communities over a long period of time has demonstrated that the most efficient method of handling vehicular traffic is to improve a relatively small number of strategically located thoroughfares directly aligned having wide pavements, and to develop a network of such arteries serving all of the major traffic movements. These main traffic arteries have become known as "major streets" or "major thoroughfares".

Experience has indicated that when a major thoroughfare system has been developed, the 20 percent of the street system that comprises this system can carry 80 to 90 percent of a community's traffic movements. The remaining 80 percent of the street system then serves mostly as a means of access to abutting property. Because most of the area of an urban community is used for residential purposes, this removes heavy traffic from residential streets which can be paved with a narrow pavement and be indirect in alignment to discourage use by heavy through traffic.

The width of a major street, insofar as both pavement and right-of-way are concerned, must be related to the volume of traffic expected to use it. Predictions of the volume of traffic that will be in any part of a street in the future will depend upon the basic changes in the land use pattern, and in the type of improvements that are made on other portions of the street system. Customarily, about 10 percent of the 24-hour traffic volume is found during the peak hour. This is the critical time for traffic flow and the major street system should be designed to accommodate the peak hour movements if it is to serve the community satisfactorily. As a general rule, a major street in a typical urban area will accommodate approximately 500 cars per lane per hour, although this capacity may be increased by traffic control devices, one-way street, properly timed street lights, etc.

The Town of Merrillville is served by several major thoroughfares and a segment of the Interstate Highway System: Indiana State Routes 55 and 53, Merrillville-Madison-Harrison Street, and Interstate 65 which traverse the Town in a north-south direction; and U.S. Route 30 and Old Lincoln Highway which pass through the Town on an east-west alignment.

Traffic Volumes

Major traffic movements in Merrillville reflect present levels of demand and are a basic indicator of future highway demands within the community. Traffic volume information was secured from the Indiana State Highway Commission for the year 1972, and from the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission for the years 1971 and 1972. The greatest traffic volumes in Merrillville in 1972 occurred on Interstate 65. (See Plate 10.) Within Merrillville, the 24-hour volumes on Interstate 65 ranged from 17,600 vehicles at a point just north of 101st Street to 38,200 vehicles north of the 61st Street interchange.

Indiana Route 53 (Broadway Street), which has a pavement width sufficient to accommodate four lanes of traffic, carried the next highest volumes of traffic within Merrillville. The 24-hour volume at 101st Street was approximately 4,800 vehicles. This volume gradually increased as the traffic moved northerly. Approximately one-half mile north of 57th Avenue, the 24-hour volume was 30,500 vehicles. The high volume of traffic on Broadway Street indicates the importance of this thoroughfare as a major route of intra-regional travel from Merrillville to the employment centers to the north.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA
TRAFFIC VOLUMES
VEHICULAR SCALE
40,800 24 HOUR ANNUAL AVERAGE TOTAL TRAFFIC*
11,400 1971-1972 BASIC TRAFFIC VOLUME COUNTS**
*SOURCE: INDIANA STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION
**SOURCE: LAKE PORTER COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND PLANNING COMMISSION
13,900
14,800
7,801
7,185
6,297
6,892
STREET
30,500
40,800
38,200
AVE.
26,600
61 ST.
5,755
27,800
11,756
5,879
STREET
MADISON ST.
INTERSTATE 65
31,600
2,909
73 RD.
12,650
AVENUE
7,361
18,000
2,063
3,848
2,865
11,500
12,600
17,200
9,675
U.S. HIGHWAY 30
11,100
23,400
680
U.S. HIGHWAY 30
13,150
16,800
6,350
17,350
TAFT
BROADWAY
1,464
852
12,600
13,900
COLORADO STREET
271
STATE ROAD
383
RANDOLPH STREET
1,497
INTERSTATE 65
422
5,275
17,600
89
1,297
PREPARED FOR
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AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

PLATE 10

Indiana Route 55 (Taft Street) and Merrillville-Madison-Harrison Streets are two-lane thoroughfares which carry substantially less traffic than the other two major north-south thoroughfares. Twenty-four hour volumes on Taft Street did not exhibit the significant increases from south to north as experienced on Broadway Street and Interstate 65. The 24-hour volume on Taft Street at 93rd Street was 12,600. Just south of U.S. Route 30, the 24-hour volume was 13,150 vehicles; just north of U.S. Route 30, it was 9,675 vehicles. From U.S. Route 30 northward, the 24-hour volume increased from 9,675 vehicles to 13,400 vehicles at the Merrillville corporate limits. Traffic volumes on Merrillville-Madison-Harrison Street ranged from 1,778 vehicles, south of U.S. Route 30, to 7,801 vehicles, north of 57th Street. Merrillville-Madison-Harrison Street has a primary function of accommodating local traffic. Taft Street has a dual function of serving local traffic movements and carrying through traffic to other major thoroughfares. U.S. Route 30 (Lincoln Highway) carries most of the east-west traffic through Merrillville. Traffic volumes range from 17,200 vehicles (measured west of Whitcomb Street) to 23,400 vehicles (measured just east of the Interstate 65 interchange). As Route 30 is the only major east-west thoroughfare which traverses Merrillville, it serves a vital function in connecting Merrillville with other urban centers such as Valparaiso to the east and Joliet, Illinois to the west.

Old Lincoln Highway (73rd Avenue) is the only other east-west thoroughfare which has any significant continuity. This route extends from the intersection of Lindbergh Street and U.S. Route 30 in Schererville to Deep River on the Lake-Porter County line. The traffic volumes on 73rd Avenue range from about 2,970 vehicles measured at a point west of Whitcombe Street, to 7,360 vehicles at the location of the Town Hall. Seventy-third Avenue has a pavement wide enough to accommodate only two lanes of traffic - which may have an effect on the future level of service of this thoroughfare, as there does not appear to be sufficient right-of-way nor enough land to acquire additional right-of-way to widen the pavement to four lanes west of Broadway Street. The existing traffic volumes and the level of service of 73rd Avenue indicate that most of the traffic movements on this route are internal trips within the planning area.

Sixty-first Street, which serves as a collector street, should be mentioned as it serves and will continue to serve an important link in the thoroughfare network. There are only two interchanges on Interstate 65 in Merrillville: one is located at U.S. Route 30, and the other is located at 61st Street. The interchange at 61st Street has attracted

large volumes of traffic which use 61st Street. Between Broadway Street and Interstate 65, the volumes have been measured at about 11,756 vehicles on 61st Street, which has a pavement wide enough to accommodate only two lanes of traffic. This indicates that 61st Street is probably operating at or near its capacity and cannot accommodate any additional traffic.

Traffic Controls

Traffic control devices and signs organize vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In terms of function, they are placed to regulate, warn or guide. Their size, placement, readability, illumination, reflectorization and color are important to the safety and convenience of the motoring and pedestrian public. Of utmost importance in the use of traffic control devices is that they be uniform.

At heavily-traveled major intersections, traffic signals proportion and assign time to crossing traffic. At present, there are 12 signalized intersections in Merrillville. (See Plate 11.) The signals located at the intersection of Van Buren Street and 73rd Avenue are used as flashing yellow warning lights after school hours.

Circulation Problems

A number of natural and man-made obstacles exist which influence vehicular circulation in Merrillville. (See Plate 11.) The geographic relationship of Merrillville to the Chicago Metropolitan Area and the Gary-Hammond Metropolitan Area has resulted in a predominance of north-south streets. As development has occurred along the major north-south streets, care has not been taken in providing the necessary east-west collector streets. For example, because of the development west of Taft Street, there is little or no possibility that 61st Street will ever be extended west of Taft Street. Care should be taken to designate future collector streets through the large unplatted areas of Town to avoid further problems.

Presently, all of the railroad crossings in Merrillville, except at Interstate 65, are crossings at-grade, with only those crossings at Broadway Street having crossbucks. Grade separations and bridges are extremely costly improvements which will have to be considered in the planning program.

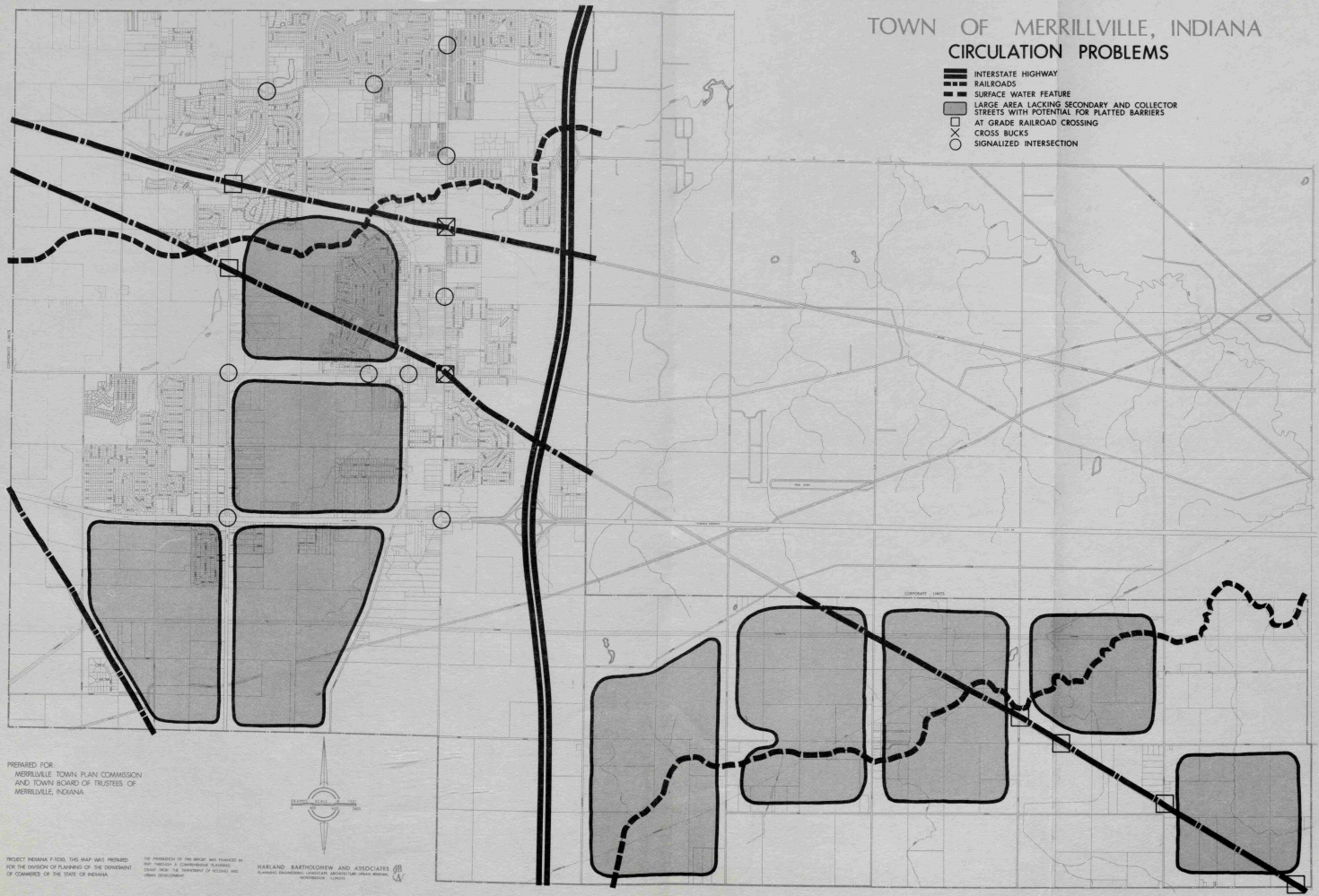
Other problems include the physical barrier created by the limited access characteristics of Interstate 65, which restricts the options for location of future east-west thoroughfares.

Natural features which will influence the location of future thoroughfares include Turkey Creek and the Deep River.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

CIRCULATION PROBLEMS

- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- RAILROADS
- SURFACE WATER FEATURE
- LARGE AREA LACKING SECONDARY AND COLLECTOR STREETS WITH POTENTIAL FOR PLATTED BARRIERS
- AT GRADE RAILROAD CROSSING
- CROSS BUCKS
- SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION



PREPARED FOR:
MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

PROJECT INDIANA P-1030, THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR THE DIVISION OF PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 11

Condition of Pavement

Data on conditions of pavement and rights-of-way prepared by Lake County Highway Commission was not available at the time of this writing. Every attempt will be made to obtain this information for inclusion in a letter report.

Railroad Facilities

Over one-half of the interregional freight tonnage generated in the Chicago Metropolitan Area moves by railroad. As industrial growth occurs in Merrillville, rail service will become increasingly more important. Merrillville is presently traversed by three railroads: the Erie Lackawanna Railway; the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad; and the Grand Trunk Western Railroad. All of the rail facilities traverse Merrillville on a north-west-southeast alignment. Of the three railroads, the Grand Trunk Western and the Erie Lackawanna carry the most freight traffic; each has a traffic density of between 20 and 29.9 million gross ton miles per year. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad has a traffic density of between 10 and 19.9 million gross ton miles per year through Merrillville.

There are no commuter rail facilities in Merrillville. The nearest commuter rail facility is located in Crown Point, approximately four miles to the south.

ECONOMIC BASE

Merrillville is located on the suburban fringe of the Chicago Metropolitan Area, which includes Chicago, as well as the other urban complexes along the southern point of Lake Michigan. As such, it is economically tied to the Chicago area through employment, investment, industry and commerce. On a smaller scale, Merrillville is a major suburban growth area of the Northwest Indiana Region - the economic center of which is located in the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago areas along Lake Michigan. The ties between Merrillville and the economy of the Northwest Indiana Region are extremely strong and, in many ways, the economic base of the region and its future are more important to the Town of Merrillville than the economic activities in the Town itself.

The major portions of this report center on the economic base of the Town of Merrillville itself. Since little data is available on the Town due to its recent incorporation, much of the data presented herein is the result of interviews with those in the community.

The Regional Economy

The Northwestern Indiana Region is heavily oriented to manufacturing. In 1967, approximately half the workers in Lake County were employed in manufacturing, with about two-thirds of those employed in the primary metals sector. Although some diversification has occurred in the intervening years, it does not appear to have altered this basic concentration of employment appreciably. Steel and primary metals plants, as well as chemical and petroleum plants, continue to be the major elements of the economy in the Region, and many persons living in Merrillville travel daily to the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago area for employment.

The Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission is currently updating its economic analyses and projections. When completed, the conclusions should be incorporated into the Town Plan where appropriate.

Town of Merrillville

In contrast to the Region, Merrillville has developed as a community whose economic base consists primarily of various commercial facilities and offices. Over the years, Broadway Street has developed commercially as urbanization

has spread from Gary to the south. Today, Broadway and U.S. 30 are considered the prime commercial development areas. The recent completion of I-65 through Merrillville has, in fact, spurred development along U.S. 30.

Employment in Merrillville

Approximately 75 percent of the jobs in the Town of Merrillville are in the trade and services sectors. (See Table 3.) These categories are made up of a number of larger establishments (having an employment around 200 persons) and many smaller establishments. Construction and manufacturing employment make up a relatively small portion of total employment.

Labor Force

The labor force for Merrillville in 1973 was estimated at 10,200 persons - around 39 percent of the total population. This is consistent with the national standard of 40 percent.

Employment of Residents

Based on 1970 census data for the unincorporated areas of Merrillville, Rexville and Lottaville, the employment pattern of Merrillville residents is very similar to that of Lake County and the Region. (See Table 4.) Thirty-eight (38) percent of residents employed were employed in manufacturing, with 30 percent employed in primary metals industries. Percentagewise, Merrillville exceeds Lake County in persons employed in the categories of construction; retail trade; and finance, insurance and real estate - due, no doubt, to the commercial orientation and the construction in the area.

Commuting Pattern

At the time of the 1970 census, 86 percent of workers in the Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville area worked in Lake County, with 11 percent commuting outside the County.

Within the County, considerable commuting takes place to the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago industrial and business complexes. With an estimated 10,200 workers in the 1973 labor force and around 4,000 jobs, there is a net out-commutation of around 6,000 employees - not unusual for a fringe suburban community such as Merrillville.

Table 3

EMPLOYMENT IN MERRILLVILLE
1971

Category	Ross Township	Merrillville
Construction	326	290
Manufacturing	262	203
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1,487	1,339
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	289	289
Services	1,428	1,336
Other	211	195
TOTAL	4,003	3,652

Source: Prepared by Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission from data furnished by State of Indiana. (Does not include self-employed.)

Table 4

INDUSTRY GROUPING OF RESIDENTS
1970

Category	Lake County		Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture and Mining	1,393	0.7	27	0.4
Construction	10,858	5.4	532	8.5
Manufacturing	91,415	45.4	2,404	38.3
Primary Metals	(62,160)	(30.9)	(1,863)	(29.7)
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	11,827	5.9	335	5.3
Wholesale Trade	5,317	2.6	136	2.2
Retail Trade	29,464	14.6	1,112	17.7
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	7,653	3.8	382	6.1
Services	43,418	21.6	1,346	21.5
TOTAL	201,345	100.0	6,274	100.0

Source: U.S. Census - 1970

Retail Trade

Year	Retail Sales - Lake County
1958[1]	$ 581,514,000
1967[1]	856,502,000
1972[2]	1,137,000,000

[1] Census of Business

[2] Sales Management Survey of Buying Power

Retail sales in Lake County have consistently increased in the 1958 to 1972 period. Recent years have shown an increase in the proportion of retail sales made outside Gary-Hammond-East Chicago. Estimates for 1972 show about two-thirds of the sales in the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago area and one-third in the remainder of the County. This balance should gradually shift in favor of the outlying areas over the planning period.

Data on retail trade for the Town of Merrillville itself is not available. However, market studies made for potential investors in the area are extremely favorable. The primary trade area delineated includes most of Lake County, and the secondary trade area extends into the Chicago Metropolitan Area as well. Population and buying income figures for these trade areas are high and, together with location factors, have spurred investment.

Development Trends

The last five years have seen considerable development activity in the Merrillville area. Building permit applications have been quite steady (see Table 5), with total value over the 1969-73 period at over $100 million. Commercial-industrial permits have amounted to over $50 million - approximately half of building permit value and probably representing as much as 65 to 75 percent of actual construction.

Since the completion of Interstate 65 through Merrillville and the announcement of the Southlake Mall (now nearing completion of Phase I), U.S. 30 has emerged as the center of commercial and related development activities for the Town and for Northwest Indiana. Development plans approved for this area by the respective legislative bodies include over six million square feet of retail, office and light

Table 5

BUILDING PERMITS IN
UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF
ROSS TOWNSHIP
1969-1973

Year	Single-Family		Multi-Family		Commercial-Industrial	
	Units	Value	Units	Value	New Bldg.	Value
1969	244	$ 4.6M	389	$ 3.9M	19	$ 2.2M
1970	184	3.6M	60	0.6M	14	3.0M
1971	260	4.9M	251	3.1M	22	18.0M
1972	148	3.3M	1,588	18.3M	50	26.6M
1973						
Ross Township	13	N/A	-	-	8	N/A
Merrillville	130	3.2M	190	2.6M	29	6.5M
TOTAL	979	$19.6M	2,478	$28.5M	142	$56.3M

Source: Lake County Planning Department
Merrillville Planning Department

Note: The above information shows building permits - not construction. In some instances, no construction has occurred; particularly in 1972, where building permits were acquired prior to incorporation of Merrillville.

industrial space, as well as a major hospital facility for the area.(10)

The major generator for this development, the Southlake Mall, deserves special mention. The center will be the major shopping facility in this part of the Northwest Indiana area and has already or will soon have a major impact on buying patterns, travel patterns, land values and utility needs. Planned for 1.2 million square feet and including Sears, Penneys, and Carson, Pirie & Scott stores, the development is a marked contrast to the many "discount" type retail stores and walk-in carry-out food outlets built in the past five years along Broadway. The high cost of land along U.S. 30 will no doubt encourage development of high-intensity office buildings capable of generating sufficient income to be feasible. This is reflected in current development plans.

Problems and Prospects

The amount, rate and long-range quality of economic development underway now in Merrillville and which will take place in the future are a function of the broader economic picture, the availability of services, and the stability and energy of the community. While some of these factors are beyond the scope of local government, local government does at least have the opportunity to influence, by actions and regulations, some of these factors. In the course of interviewing leaders and firms in Merrillville, a number of problems were identified, whose resolution will have a pronounced effect on the long-range economy of the town and adjacent areas:

1. Development Plan and Strategy. There is a need for a plan and strategy to guide development in a logical and orderly manner. This program, of course, is the first step toward the plan.

2. Water and Sewer. Adequate provision of water and sewer to developments is a primary concern. Fragmented responsibilities for areas of the Town, inadequate overall facilities, and stricter future regulations all point to a deficiency which will need to be corrected.

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(10) Estimated from discussions with planning staff and Post-Tribune article of February 24, 1974.

3. Inventory Tax. The Indiana tax on the inventory of wholesalers and retailers, with adjacent states not having such a tax, has stymied much light industrial development. The legislature has, over the years, considered eliminating this levy and support will be required to accomplish the change.

4. The Development Wave. Market conditions and the development process can produce varied development patterns. In some instances, it may be a long and stable development pattern or, on the other hand, it can be dynamic - peak and then trail off. The present pattern in Merrillville apperas to be the latter, although land and building costs may stretch it out. The key will be to look ahead beyond the peak and plan for stabilizing of the older and more vulnerable commercial areas.

5. The Gary Influence. The spreading out of the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago SMSA into adjacent areas, and the problems of race and crime which are assumed to go with this, were expressed often as an underlying fear in the community.

In conclusion, the economic prospects for Merrillville can only be described as exceptional. The Town has the prospect for a strong economic base. While it is possible that not all the development contemplated along U.S. 30 will take place as now planned, the area is outstanding for retail, office, motel-restaurant, light industrial development, and other Interstate oriented uses. All these uses have financial and employment advantages to the Town of Merrillville.

POPULATION

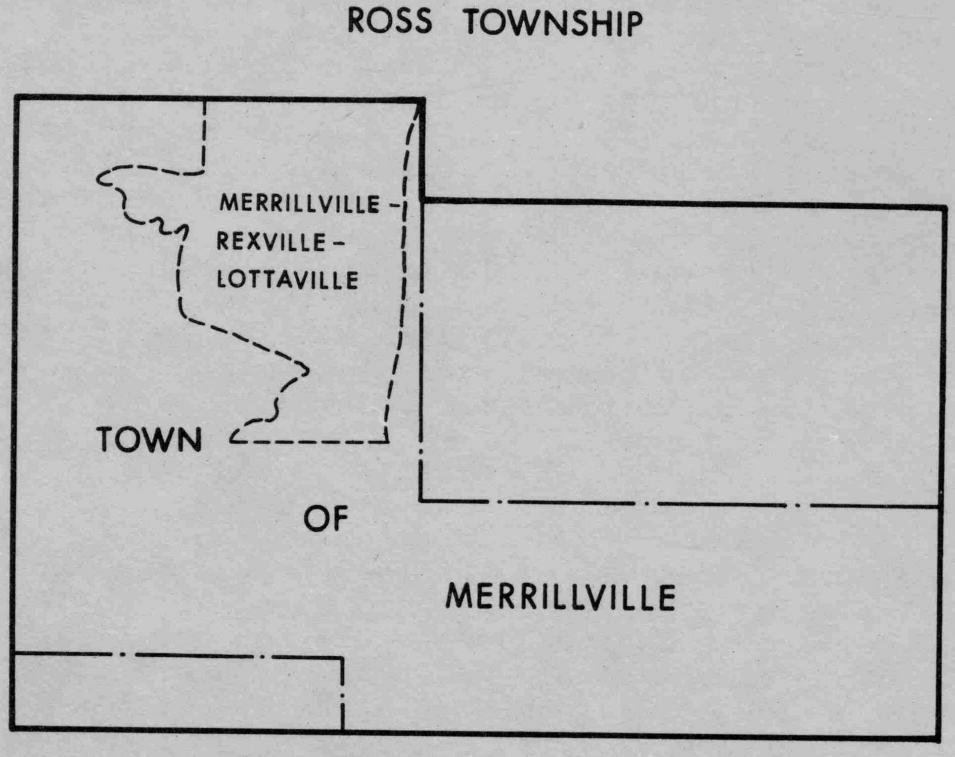
Located just south of the Gary-Hammond-East Chicago SMSA in Lake County, Indiana, Merrillville is a growing suburban community. While the population of the central cities along Lake Michigan has been steadily declining, Merrillville has been growing as the community offers more desirable options to life in the central city. Today, Merrillville appears to be the focus of the dynamic population changes in the Northwest Indiana Region and Lake County. Merrillville is distinctly young, suburban, upwardly mobile and growing.

Because Merrillville was just recently incorporated, detailed population information is rather limited. A special census was prepared in October, 1973 which includes statistics for population, age, race and sex. As a part of the 1970 census, data was compiled for the unincorporated area of Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville (see Plate 12), containing some of the more developed portions of the future town and representing about 55 percent of the Ross Township population at the time. While this data collection area was less than the land area of the future town and cannot be considered a statistically accurate sample of the town, it nevertheless provides valuable information into the characteristics of Merrillville people in general.

Number of Inhabitants and Dynamics of Population Change

The special census set the 1973 population for the Town of Merrillville at 25,978 persons. Merrillville represents a large part, both in area and population, of Ross Township. Ross Township almost doubled in population over the 1960-70 census period and is one of the fastest growing townships in Indiana (see Table 6), in a county which recorded only a 6.4 percent increase over the same period. Ross Township's growth, of which Merrillville was a part, was also much greater than that of the state and nation.

The components of population change for Lake County for 1960-70 further illustrate the dynamic situation now occurring in Merrillville. During this period, and while Ross Township and Merrillville were growing, the county experienced a net out-migration equal to over eight percent of its population. Since there was a net in-migration of nonwhite population, the net out-migration of while population was even greater than this total. (See Table 7.) In the



STATISTICAL BOUNDARIES FOR CENSUS DATA

PLATE 12

Table 6

POPULATION TRENDS, 1960-1973

	1973	1970	1960	1960-70 Percent Change
United States	-	203,211,926	179,323,175	11.8
State of Indiana	-	5,193,669	4,662,451	10.2
Lake County	-	546,253	513,269	6.4
Ross Township	-	28,845	14,854	94.2
Merrillville	25,978	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Census, 1960 and 1970, and Special Census 1973

Table 7

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE, 1960-1970

Lake County, Indiana

	Births	Deaths	Net Migration
Total	118,357	42,836	-42,537
White	92,403	34,212	-51,949
Non-white	25,954	8,624	+ 9,412

Source: U. S. Census 1970

Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville area, from 1965 to 1970, 85 percent of those moving into the area moved from within Lake County. The population figures and interviews with local officials indicate that growth in the Merrillville area is directly related to the movement of whites to the suburbs from the central city areas of Northwest Indiana - and this trend may continue for some time, although there is some evidence that this "flight" has peaked.

Those who move to Merrillville are generally middle aged families with children. They are more permanent than the county median, with 89.2 percent being homeowners compared to 63.8 percent of the county residents. Reflecting the upward mobility of the new residents, the median value of owner-occupied dwelling units was $24,300 in 1970 compared to only $16,900 for the county. The vacancy rate among such housing was less than one-half of one percent.

Population Characteristics

Age

In terms of age distribution, the community is relatively young with approximately 40 percent of the population being under 19 years old, slightly higher than Indiana and the nation as a whole. Relatively few residents are over 65 years of age; only six percent compared to over nine percent for Indiana and the nation. The number of young and single-person households is also relatively low, with approximately 19 percent of the population being between the ages of 20 and 34 years, compared to almost 27 percent between the ages of 35 and 54 years. (See Table 8.) Keeping with the national trend of declining birth rates, 7.6 percent of the population of Merrillville is under five years of age, resulting in a fertility rate of 296 children under five years of age per thousand women. This is lower than the county average of 373 per thousand women, but considerably higher than the figures of 185 for Indiana and 180 for the nation.

Sex and Race

As shown below, the percentage of male and female is quite similar to the state and nation. The percentage of white to non-white is considerably below the state and national average; however, the percentage for Lake County exceeds these averages considerably.

Table 8

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Merrillville, Indiana

Age	1973[1] Merrillville Number	1973[1] Merrillville Percent	1970[2] Indiana Percent	1970[2] United States Percent
Under 5	1,961	7.6	8.8	8.4
5-9	2,543	9.8	10.2	9.8
10-14	3,126	12.0	10.5	10.2
15-19	2,645	10.2	9.7	9.4
20-24	1,623	6.2	8.0	8.1
25-29	1,696	6.5	6.6	6.6
30-34	1,699	6.5	5.6	5.6
35-39	1,594	6.1	5.3	5.5
40-44	1,753	6.8	5.8	5.9
45-49	1,794	6.9	6.0	6.0
50-54	1,744	6.8	5.3	5.5
55-59	1,388	5.3	4.7	4.9
60-64	893	3.4	4.0	4.2
Over 65	1,519	5.9	9.5	9.9
TOTAL	25,978	100.0	100.0	100.0

(1) Special Census - 1973

(2) Age percentage for the State of Indiana and United States are from the 1970 Census.

SEX AND RACE CHARACTERISTICS

	Male	Female	White	Non-White
United States - 1970	48.7	51.3	87.5	12.5
Indiana - 1970	48.7	51.3	92.8	7.2
Merrillville - 1973	49.2	50.8	99.7	0.3

Household Size

The household size in the Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville unit was 3.7 persons per household. This is greater than the 3.1 per household average for the state and nation, reflecting the family orientation of the community. Estimates prepared from the land use survey and 1973 special census show the household size for the overall Town to be in the area of 3.25 persons per household.

Income

As might be expected from the value of housing and high homeownership rate, the median income for families in the Merrillville-Lottaville-Rexville area in 1970 was $13,965, more than $3,000 per year above the median family income for Lake County, Indiana, or the United States. Although the three communities comprised only three percent of the county population, seven percent of the families in the county with an annual income of over $25,000 lived in the Merrillville area. (See Table 9.) A much lower percentage of families in the area have an annual income less than the poverty level; only 2.2 percent as compared to 7.4 percent for Lake County. For the most part, the families with limited income are the elderly families and individuals whose social security income is fixed at below the poverty level. In 1970, only 18 of the area's 15,918 residents were receiving public assistance.

A contributing factor to the comfortable median family income is the participation of women in the work force. Of the 5,401 females 16 years and older, 37 percent were employed in 1970. The majority of employed women worked in permanent full-time jobs and were married, thereby contributing significantly to the household income.

Area Population Projections

Population projections for the Merrillville area were prepared by the Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission as a part of the Regional Transportation Planning Studies. These projections were used in preparing the 1995 Transportation Plan and are shown below:

Table 9

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1970

Lake County and Merrillville, Indiana

	Lake County	Merrillville-Rexville-Lottaville
All families	134,846	4,023
Less than $3,000	9,614	102
$3,000 to $4,999	8,375	89
$5,000 to $7,999	18,995	286
$8,000 to $9,999	20,464	306
$10,000 to $11,999	21,854	656
$12,000 to $14,999	23,819	874
$15,000 to $24,999	26,920	1,367
$25,000 and above	4,805	343
Median Income	$10,913	$13,965
Per Capita Income of Persons	$ 3,156	$ 3,971

Source: U.S. Census 1970

	1970	1975	1985	1995
Lake County	546,253	581,500	663,500	757,500
Ross Township	28,845	35,000	49,000	68,000

Source: U.S. Census - 1970 and Short-Range Program: Forecast Phase, Lake-Porter County Regional Transportation and Planning Commission, October, 1970.

The above projections anticipate a six to seven percent increase in population per five-year period for the County. Ross Township is expected to increase in population at a rate of around 20 percent per five-year period. The sizable growth projected for Ross Township (and for Merrillville) is consistent with findings of this study. No long-range projections of enrollment for the area are available.

Analysis by Planning Component

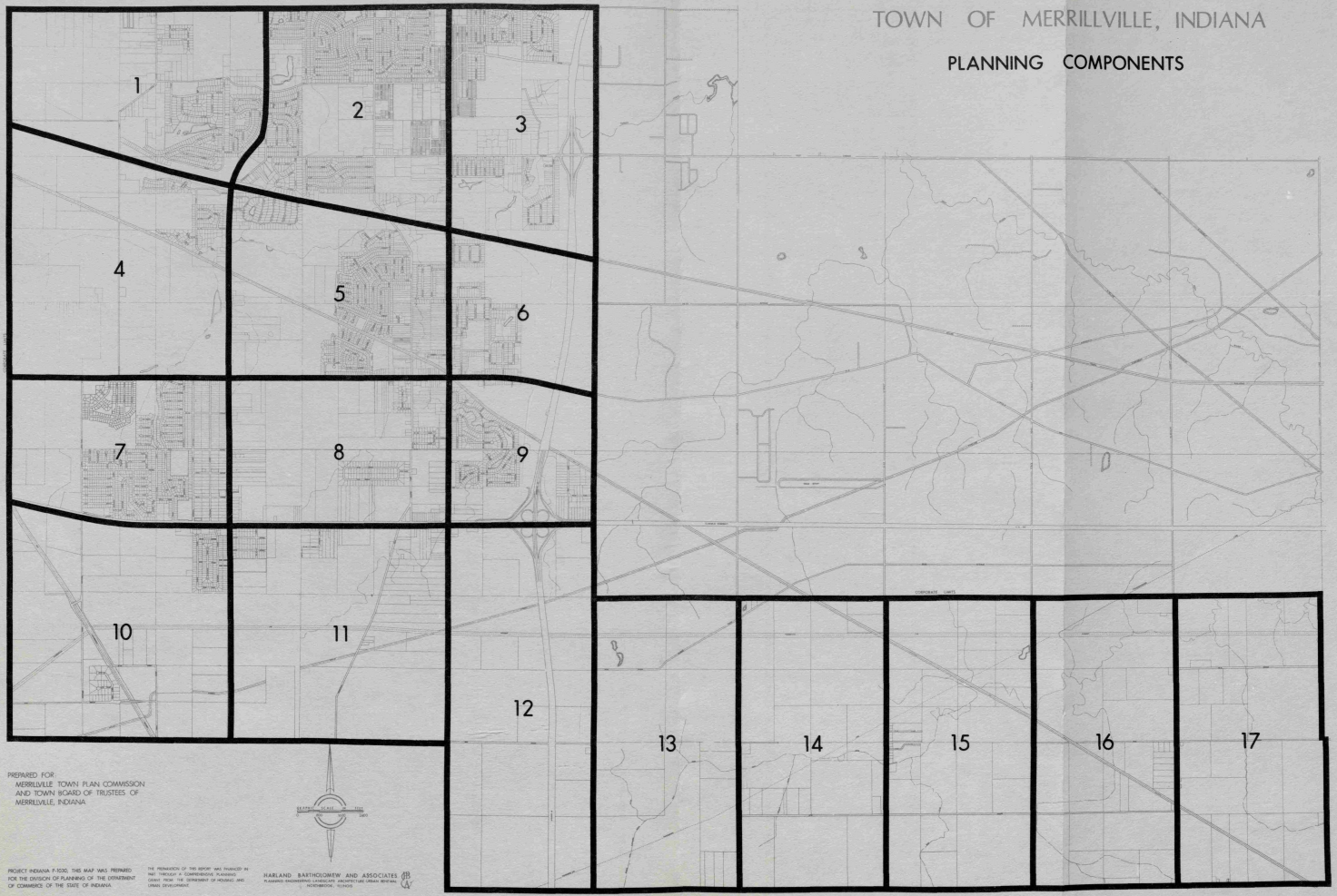
To facilitate small area analysis and planning, the Town of Merrillville was divided into 17 planning components. (See Plate 13.) Criteria used included present statistical boundaries, major roads and railroads, known clusters of housing having similar identity, and general land use patterns. Population distribution and density are shown by planning component on Table 10.

The more developed planning components, generally those along Broadway and Taft from Gary to the south, had the largest concentrations of population. Planning component 2 is estimated to have just under 7,000 persons. On the other hand, the undeveloped southeastern planning components are estimated to have less than 100 persons in each.

Dwelling unit densities for the components are all relatively low, with components 2, 5 and 7 exceeding 1.00 dwelling units per acre and the remaining components less than 1.00.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

PLANNING COMPONENTS



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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

Table 10

POPULATION AND
POPULATION DENSITY

Merrillville, Indiana

Planning Component	Estimated[1] Population 1974	Density in Dwelling Units per Gross Acre
1	2,050	0.48
2	6,730	1.66
3	3,500	0.98
4	620	0.11
5	4,490	1.11
6	1,020	0.47
7	3,980	1.33
8	550	0.17
9	1,250	0.63
10	720	0.16
11	230	0.05
12	30	0.01
13	40	0.01
14	70	0.02
15	80	0.03
16	70	0.02
17	70	0.02
Town	25,500	0.40

(1) Based on estimated 3.25 persons per dwelling unit - rounded to nearest 10 persons.

Source: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1974

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Public schools are one of the most important public facilities to be provided in any community. The complexities of today's technological society demand well-educated and informed citizens. Not too long ago, a high school education was considered adequate to prepare a person for many careers. This is no longer true. Now a high school graduation is a minimum level of educational attainment, and many young people continue their education at colleges, universities and technical schools.

As the demand for education has changed, so has the role of the public school. Today, schools serve as a focal point in the neighborhood where a wide range of programs are often available for all age groups. Today's school is a modern, flexible facility which provides a wide variety of courses designed to prepare the student for high school and college.

Principles and Standards

The enrollment of an elementary school may vary within a range of 200 and 800 pupils. The elementary school site should contain a minimum of five acres plus one additional acre for each 100 pupils of predicted maximum enrollment. This would result in a site of 10 acres for a school with 500 students, or 17 acres for a school with an enrollment of 1,200 students.

The elementary school, as the nucleus of a neighborhood, should be located centrally and within walking distance of those in attendance. In a fully developed residential area, this would be one-quarter to one-half mile. A central location enables the school playground to be used during the summer as well as during the school year as a part of a community-wide, organized recreational program.

The junior high school should serve an area within a radius of approximately one mile. A site of at least 20 acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils, should be provided. Senior high schools should have a minimum site of 30 acres, plus an additional acre for each 100 pupils of predicted maximum enrollment. The necessity for large sites results from current trends for more playfield area, spacious one-story building arrangements, and more parking space.

Accessibility of the high school site is an important location factor, particularly if a wide area is to be served. The large, modern high school is a major traffic generator with a daily influx of buses and numerous student and faculty automobiles, and with periodic large scale attendance at sporting events and other community activities. Some authorities consider 800 pupils a minimum and 1,500 pupils as optimum capacity for either separate or combined junior and senior high schools. The National Educational Association recommends 700 to 1,500 pupils for junior high schools, and 1,000 to 2,000 pupils for senior high schools.

Both elementary and high schools will perform many important services beyond the teaching of pupils. Their grounds and buildings will supply a large part of the community's needs for meeting places and recreation.

Existing Facilities

Ross Township School Corporation operates five eleemntary schools, two junior high schools, and one senior high school which serve students from Merrillville. (See Plate 14.) Of these schools, only one, John Wood, is not located in Merrillville. With the exception of Pierce Junior High School, which was constructed in 1929, all of the facilities were constructed within the last 20 years.

Merrillville Senior High School was originally constructed in 1954. The school is located on a 40-acre site and has a capacity of 1,800 students. Additions to the original building were constructed in 1957, 1958, 1966, 1971 and 1972. The facility serves grades 10 through 12. A 1972 Study of the Ross Township School Corporation indicated that the high school's interior facilities were generally suitable and adequate.(11)

Fortunately, the high school site is large enough to accommodate future expansion of the physical facilities when additional space is necessary.

Harrison Junior High School is the newest facility in the Ross Township School System. The school was constructed in 1971 and there have been no additions to the original building. The school is located on a 40-acre site which

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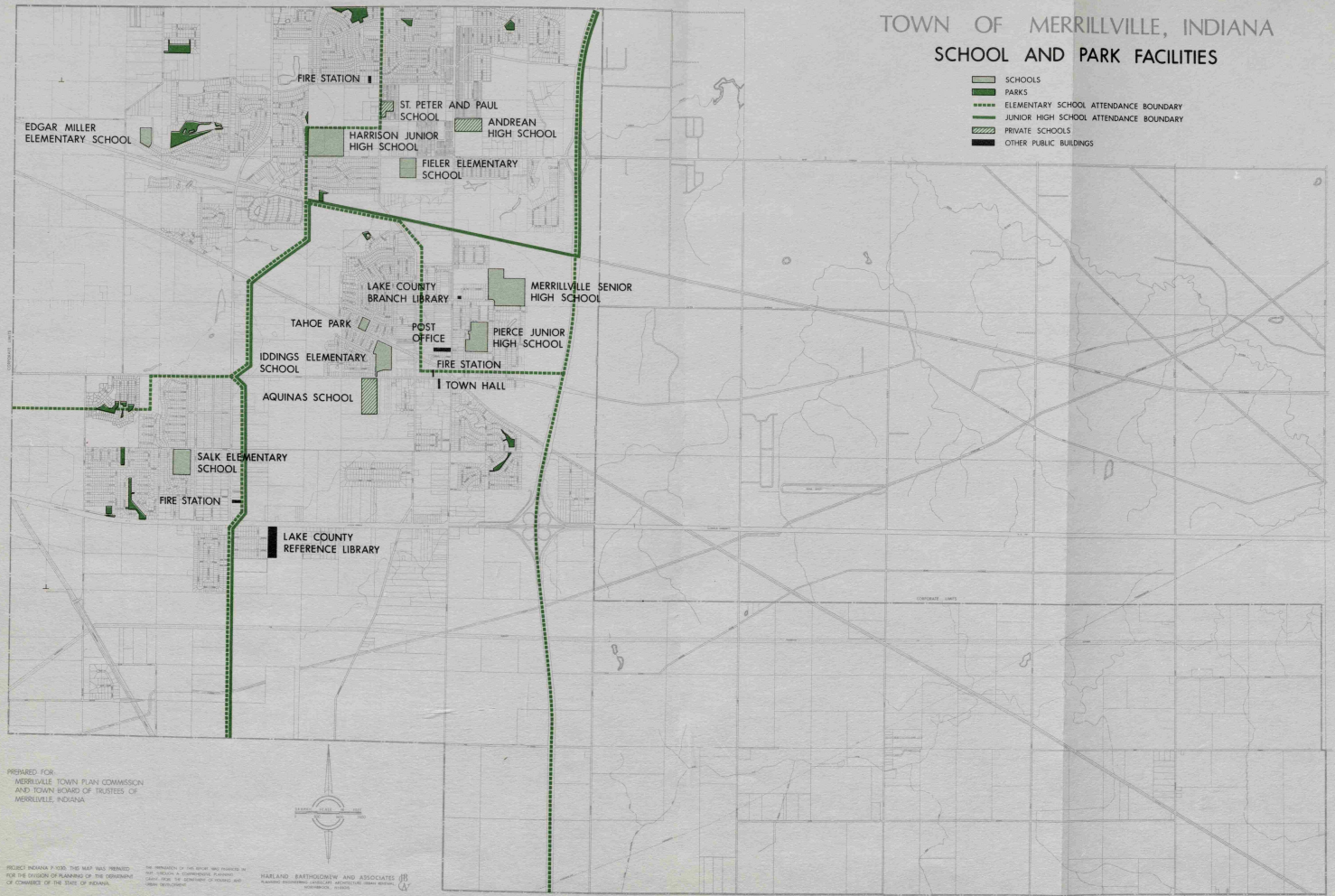
(11) A Consultant Study of the Ross Township School Corporation, October 1972, Drs. Paul W. Nesper and Merle T. Strom, Ball State University.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SCHOOL AND PARK FACILITIES



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AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

PROJECT INDIANA P-1030. THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR THE DIVISION OF PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS

offers much room for additional expansion. A physical limitation on the site is the drainage ditch which effectively bisects the site and might be a determining factor for the location of future expansion of the building. The capacity of the school is 1,200 students. The facility serves grades seven through nine.

Pierce Junior High School is the oldest facility in the Ross Township system. The original building was constructed in 1929. Subsequent additions to the school were constructed in 1942, 1949, 1964 and 1966. The school was not in service during the 1971-72 and 1972-73 school years while it was being remodeled to provide a flexible platform for a total junior high school educational program. The school is situated on an 18-acre site located a short distance to the southwest of Merrillville High School. The grades served are seven through nine and the capacity of the school is approximately 900 students.

Henry P. Fieler Elementary School is the oldest elementary facility in the Ross Township system. The school was originally constructed in 1958 with subsequent additions built in 1961 and 1962. The facility is situated on a 10-acre site and has a capacity for 690 students. The grades served are K through six, and the attendance area is generally the northeast portion of the Town.

The Homer Iddings School was constructed in 1964 with a subsequent addition in 1969. The school is situated on a 19-acre site. The grades served are K through six and the capacity of the facility is 780 students. The attendance area is generally the central area of Merrillville between Interstate Route 65 and Taft Street, south of the Grand Trunk Western Railroad.

Edgar Miller Elementary School was constructed in 1966 and no additions to the original structure have been built. The school is situated on a 17-acre site and has a capacity of 720 students. The grades served are K through six. The attendance area for this school is generally the northwest portion of Merrillville.

The Jonas Salk Elementary School is located on a 15-acre site. The school was constructed in 1961 with subsequent additions constructed in 1963, 1967, and 1969. The grades served are K through six, and the capacity of the facility is approximately 1,000 students. The attendance area is generally the southwest portion of Merrillville.

The John Wood Elementary School is the only facility in the Ross Township system that is not located in Merrillville. The school was originally constructed in 1962 and is situated on a 15-acre site. Subsequent additions to the original building were constructed in 1963 and 1967. This school serves grades K through six, and has a capacity of about 600 students. The John Wood School attendance area includes all of the Ross Township, east of Interstate Route 65.

In addition to the existing school facilities, the Ross Township School Corporation owns three unimproved sites for future use. One site located on 97th Street in Crown Point has an area of 14 acres. Another site has an area of 10 acres and is located on Indiana Route 330 West. The third site has an area of 25 acres and is located immediately north of Harrison Junior High School.

At this writing, the school corporation has only one major building program in progress. The project involves the senior high school, a new administration building, two school bus barns (capacity 60 buses), and a bus maintenance garage. The project includes the purchase of a 27-acre parcel of land adjacent to the high school and an approximate outlay of four to five million dollars in construction and equipment costs.

There are three private schools located in Merrillville. Andrean High School, located on Broadway Street and 59th Avenue serves grades nine through 12. Saints Peter and Paul School, located on Harrison Street south of 58th Avenue, serves grades K through eight. Aquinas School, located on 73rd Street at Van Buren Street, serves grades K through eight.

Adequacy of School Facilities

The adequacy of school facilities may be measured by factors such as structural condition, accessible location, size of site, and adaptability to changing educational practices. Fortunately, all of the schools in the Ross Township system are relatively new or recently remodeled so that the structural condition and flexibility of the buildings to accommodate modern teaching techniques is quite good. All of the existing facilities are well located in relationship to the more populated areas in Merrillville. With the possible exception of Edgar Miller School, all of the facilities are located on sites having better than adequate access from major thoroughfares. None of the schools

Table 11

TOTAL ENROLLMENT FOR ROSS
TOWNSHIP SCHOOL CORPORATION
1966 - 1972

Grade	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Kg.	547	597	628	630	574	567	531
1	509	541	509	577	601	556	528
2	497	506	563	529	571	613	571
3	506	522	530	568	532	597	617
4	493	535	561	554	601	562	623
5	445	518	547	570	564	614	570
6	475	474	539	568	588	566	630
7	391	507	509	561	576	629	610
8	450	415	537	510	577	602	637
9	476	500	444	584	545	620	637
10	416	470	506	457	593	544	631
11	355	399	482	491	439	595	527
12	315	345	398	443	486	420	577
Spec.	35	35	37	40	39	44	46
TOTAL	5,910	6,365	6,790	7,082	7,286	7,529	7,735

Source: Ross Township School Corporation.

are situated on sites that would be considered critical for lack of area. In fact, many of the existing schools have sites which exceed the National Educational Association Standards.

Enrollment Trends

Total enrollment in Ross Township School Corporation schools serving the Town of Merrillville increased by 36 percent between 1966 and 1972. The rate of growth during this period has been gradual with no great increases experienced from one year to the next. No one particular grade from K through 12 has shown a steady increase, as each grade has experienced periodic enrollment decreases during the period 1966 to 1972. (See Table 11.) The overall increase between 1966 and 1972 averages to an annual growth rate of about five percent.

Factors contributing to the rather gradual rate of growth are the maturing of families who moved to Merrillville in the 1950's, the slowing of construction of single-family homes in Ross Township, and the trend twoards construction of multiple-family residences which tend to generate fewer school-age children.

Special Education

Ross Township School Corporation offers a complete special education program for all physically, emotionally and mentally handicapped students. Educable mentally retarded students attend special education facilities at Henry P. Fieler Elementary School, Harrison Junior High School and Merrillville Senior High School. In addition to providing facilities for the educable mentally retarded students, speech and hearing therapy and complete psychological services are offered by Ross Township School Corporation. All other physically, emotionally and mentally handicapped students attend classes at the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative facility in unincorporated Ross Township. The Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative is comprised of ten member school corporations, including Ross Township School Corporation.

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Parks serve a three-fold purpose: (1) they provide facilities for outdoor recreation; (2) they enable historic and scenic values in the community to be preserved; and (3) they permit property poorly adapted for urban purposes, by virtue of its steepness or poor drainage, to be protected from a harmful private use. The first of these purposes is the most widely accepted. All types of people of all ages have their individual recreational demands. For the toddler, the back yard is adequate; for small children, the elementary school should provide a large measure of needed recreational facilities. Young people in junior and senior high school are interested in a wide variety of recreational activities, such as baseball, basketball, football, soccer and tennis, which often require large areas of land or special facilities.

Elements of a Park System

Following is a brief discussion of the four main types of parks that comprise the modern system, together with recreational areas of special significance.

Small Parks

Small parks of two acres or less can be valuable assets in a heavily populated area. Such areas may provide some space for active recreation, but serve mainly an ornamental function. The number of small ornamental parks should be relatively low, since their value is in their location and appearance rather than in use, and maintenance cost is high. Such parks are often developed and maintained privately.

Neighborhood Parks

The neighborhood park is an area of 10 to 40 acres for passive and active recreation for all ages. Because these parks serve roughly the same area as the elementary school, they should adjoin the school property and both areas coordinated. This neighborhood "park-school" should comprise 25 to 50 acres and provide facilities for all-season indoor and outdoor education and recreation activities. By using both the school building and the park area year-round, better play facilities can be provided for the school children and, at the same time, recreational opportunities that are of interest to the entire neighborhood can be offered.

Playfields and Community Parks

With increasing interest in competitive games and sports, there is a growing need for playfields where practically the entire area can be intensely utilized for competitive games. Where possible, these should adjoin the high school grounds but, in some instances, they can be located in a separate portion of a neighborhood or a large park. Adequate parking and spectator seating must be provided to accommodate those who may travel considerable distances to use these areas and for spectators. Such athletic fields, fully developed with all types of facilities, should occupy 20 to 40 acres.

Large Parks

In addition to the three types of facilities mentioned above, there is a need for large parks which serve the entire area. These areas are normally selected because of their topography and physical advantages, and occupy 100 acres or more. Locations on rivers are especially desirable, as are areas containing rugged topography and heavily wooded sections. While some of the large parks might be improved with public golf courses and other facilities for active recreation, the major part of the area should be maintained in its natural state to afford opportunities for picnicking, walking, riding, boating, and various types of passive recreation.

Other Park Possibilities

There are several important types of recreational areas in addition to those described above. Among these are parkways where vehicular traffic is usually restricted to passenger vehicles, and which afford access to some feature of exceptional scenic merit. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (the Laurance Rockefeller Committee), in its report to the President, dated July 21, 1962, reported that pleasure driving was the most popular of all recreational activities. Other activities that rated high in the report were overnight camping, hiking and the like. These activities should be provided in large outlying forest preserves and other large facilities that are normally provided by state or county agencies rather than by municipalities.

Parks may also be established to protect important drainage courses from building encroachment and to preserve wooded or rugged areas as belts or permanent open space.

These park strips provide haven for wildlife, require only minimum maintenance, and offer a pleasant contrast in the urban scene.

Area Standards

An accepted minimum park standard calls for one acre of parkland for each 100 persons. Approximately one-half of this should consist of local or neighborhood parks with the remainder in large parks. Other "rules of thumb" call for 10 percent of a suburban area to be set aside for parks or open space. To this requirement, there is frequently added an additional one acre of park in outlying areas for each 100 persons. These areas should be selected for their scenic value and require less intensive development than the usual urban park.

Existing Park Facilities

Since Merrillville lacks any public park system, the available recreational opportunities are somewhat limited. (See Plate 14.) The only facilities available for general active recreation are private areas within individual subdivisions. These areas total approximately 67 acres (less than .25 acres per 100 residents) which is only one-fourth of the accepted minimum standard for park areas. The usefulness of these private parks is also limited by their small size and lack of development. Only one of the park areas is larger than 10 acres and four are one acre or less in size. Several lack any kind of improvement, partly due to their location along waterways and their function as floodways and detention areas. Only nine of the 18 areas have any playground equipment; only six have hard surfaced areas for basketball and/or tennis; and only four have a baseball or softball field.

In addition to these private park areas, there are three private 18-hole golf courses in the Town. The Gary Country Club is a private membership club; the Turkey Creek and Broadmoor Clubs are private, daily fee courses.

Adequacy of Existing Facilities

In addition to limitations posed by the size and level of improvement of most park areas, the distribution of facilities does not provide adequate recreational opportunities for several areas:

Planning Component 1

Although this compenent has the largest park acreage, none of the three park areas has had any facilities constructed with the exception of one small hard-surfaced area.

Planning Component 2

The park in Meadowdale Subdivision, north of 54th Avenue, is relatively large and along with the smaller Meadowland Estates park to the east, provides some variety of facilities for the northern half of this component. However, the small parks south of 57th Avenue have only minimal recreational value because of their size and location.

Planning Component 3

There are virtually no facilities in this component; the only park area is unimproved.

Planning Component 4

There are no park facilities serving residents in this component.

Planning Component 5

Tahoe Park provides the most complete range of recreation facilities of any park in Merrillville. However, the remainder of the component has only one small, undeveloped park area. Gary and Turkey Creek Country Clubs are located in this component.

Planning Component 6

This component has no park facilities.

Planning Component 7

Several small park areas are located in this component, and provide playground facilities and limited areas for active recreation. Additional small areas will be located in the Lincoln Gardens area, north of 77th Avenue. There are no facilities serving the area east of Tancy Street. Broadmoor Golf Club is located on the western edge of this component.

Planning Component 8

This component has no park facilities.

Planning Component 9

There are two parks in this component which could serve most of the residential areas west of Interstate Highway 65.

Planning Components 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

There are primarily rural areas and have no park facilities.

Potential Park Facilities

Since much of Merrillville is presently rural in character, there are sizable open tracts of land which offer potential for future park and recreation use.

Two areas, the Beach Ridge Marsh area in northwest Merrillville, and the Merrillville Mire, at Mississippi Street and Old Lincolnway, have been identified as unique natural habitats and, therefore, are potential sites for nature preserves. Although park development would be inappropriate in these areas, a limited use related to nature study would be possible.

Other areas with scenic and natural features would be appropriate locations for large park areas serving a variety of recreation needs for the community as a whole. Within these areas, some portions could be developed for picnicking and active recreation, while other areas should be left in a natural state. These areas are generally located outside the more intensively developed portions of the Town, south of U.S. Route 30. One site, located in the southwest corner of the Town near 91st Avenue and Whitcomb Street, includes a wildlife habitat, and existing fields could be converted to active recreation areas. Two other sites are located east of Interstate Highway 65, along Deep River and its tributaries.

One of the problems which may often occur along with urban development is the disruption of the natural drainage pattern, causing flooding and erosion. Preservation in their natural state of major floodways and stream channels has a beneficial effect upon the overall drainage system, reducing the need for additional facilities to accommodate water displaced from its natural channels. These areas could also be used as part of a system of walkways connecting various parks and other public areas.

As new residential areas are developed, there will be a need for additional neighborhood parks and playfields. These should be developed jointly with elementary school sites. Adequate park area should be provided in each neighborhood so that the present deficit in total park area is not increased.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The conduct of public affairs necessitates the construction of numerous public buildings. While certain of these, such as the public schools, are distributed throughout the Town in a manner that will best serve the needs of local neighborhoods, those serving the community as a whole are usually found in a convenient central location. These may include such buildings as the municipal offices, post office, and public library.

The usefulness of a public building is measured partly by the character of its design and the quality of its construction, and partly by the appropriateness of its location. A badly designed or poorly constructed building can be a serious handicap to the conduct of business. A public building improperly located is even more wasteful and inefficient. The selection of a site for a public building, consequently, is an important planning function.

Existing Facilities

In addition to the administrative and maintenance buildings of the Town of Merrillville, several other governmental agencies have facilities in Merrillville. (See Plate 14.) The Town Hall and public works storage area is located on 73rd Avenue, just west of Broadway Street. The Town Hall presently houses all of the municipal department offices, the Town Board meeting room, and the Police Department facilities. The building was originally constructed about one hundred years ago for use as a school facility. The building was converted to the Town Hall shortly after the Town of Merrillville incorporated. The building is currently undergoing extensive internal remodeling, to better accommodate the municipal departments. The exterior of the building has not been remodeled. Although there seems to be no serious problem with the Town Hall structurally, serious consideration should be given to replacing the structure with a more efficient building specifically designed for the needs of the Town.

Three fire stations located in Merrillville, and one fire station located in unincorporated Ross Township, provide fire protection for Merrillville. The Ainsworth-Deep River Volunteer Fire Department operates the fire station in unincorporated Ross Township, which provides fire protection for most of the eastern portion of Merrillville.

Of the three fire stations located in Merrillville, the Merrillville Fire Department Station Number 1 appears to be the oldest. This facility, located on 73rd Avenue, has two bays in the original structure which houses three trucks. An addition to the rear of the structure houses an ambulance. The original building is of masonry construction and is about 50 years old. There appears to be no structural problem with the building. The only problem with this facility is that it is located on an extremely narrow lot which prohibits any expansion of the building to house additional equipment. The Independence Hill Fire Department facility, located on Taft Street is larger than the Merrillville Fire Station Number 1. The Independence Hill Fire Station has three bays and houses four trucks, one rescue van and one emergency van. The building is of frame and brick construction and seems to be in good structural condition. The only problem with this facility appears to be the inadequate parking area provided for the Fire Department personnel. Of the three fire stations in Merrillville, only the Merrillville Fire Department Station Number 2 could be considered a modern facility constructed for the express purpose of housing fire fighting equipment. This fire station, located on a large site, has two bays and houses one truck and one small grass fire unit. The fire station has one drive-through bay which facilitates the parking of the fire equipment. The fire station is not yet fully operational as it has the capacity to accommodate perhaps two more trucks.

The Lake County Library operates two facilities in Merrillville. The larger of the two facilities is the reference library located on U.S. Route 30. This facility is an attractive building situated on a large site which provides adequate space for parking. The reference library was constructed within the last five years and as such it is an extremely modern facility. The other facility operated by Lake County is a small branch library located on 68th Place east of Broadway Street. This facility is a rather attractive brick structure which was constructed about ten years ago. The major deficiency of this facility is that inadequate parking space has been provided for library patrons.

The only other public building in Merrillville is the U.S. Post Office. The Post Office is housed in a brick structure located on Broadway Street. The Post Office appears to be in excellent structural condition. Again, inadequate parking seems to be the major deficiency of the facility. The Post Office is the only federal facility in Merrillville.

UTILITIES

Certain basic services, such as the treatment and distribution of potable water and the collection and treatment of sewage, are essential for the health, safety and welfare of every citizen. Water is particularly essential to a community in the modern way of life as increased use of air conditioners, garbage disposal units and higher standards of cleanliness have increased water use each year. This increased use of water also has an effect on the sewage facilities of a community since 80 to 90 percent of the total water used becomes waste water. Of equal importance, particularly in an area such as Merrillville, is the provision of an adequate storm drainage system to eliminate or reduce accidents and property damage due to local floods.

The location of Merrillville, contiguous to Gary in the north, has been the primary influence on utilities. Both water and sewer facilities are attached to the systems serving Gary which have extended south as development has occurred. Almost all present development is located west of U.S. 65, and the utilities are concentrated there also.

Water

The Town of Merrillville is currently provided with water service by the Gary-Hobart Water Corporation which distributes potable water either directly or indirectly to most of the developed areas. The Turkey Creek and Lincoln Gardens Utility Districts are supplied water by the Gary-Hobart Water Corporation and they then distribute this water to properties within their boundaries. (See Plate 15.) Other areas within the Merrillville corporate limits, but outside the two water districts, are also served by the Gary-Hobart Water Corporation on an individual basis.

The Gary-Hobart Water Corporation obtains its water supply from Lake Michigan and treats all water received. There are no municipal water storage facilities within the Town of Merrillville, but storage facilities located in Gary serve the Merrillville area as well.

The water distribution systems consist of lines varying from six inches to 16 inches in diameter. The large mains are located on Harrison Street and Broadway Street, with smaller mains extending water service to most developed areas. Mains have been extended as far south as U.S. 30 and to lands surrounding the I-65 interchange including

extensions to the Southlake Mall now under construction. An additional main has been extended south of U.S. 30 along Broadway to serve development occurring in that area. Fire hydrants are located sporadically within the system.

There is one pumping station in the Town at 62nd Street and Broadway. Pressure in the system is acceptable and generally ranges from 72 psi at the pumping station to 35-40 psi in outlying areas. Pressures of 58 to 60 psi have been measured at the Southlake Mall east of Interstate 65 and south of U.S. Highway 30, the present terminus of the system.

On a scale of 1 to 10, the Town of Merrillville currently has a fire insurance rating of 9. This classification is based upon factors such as fire hydrant spacing, water main size, available storage, supply capacity, water pressure, and the equipment and personnel of the Fire Department.

Since the majority of the utility study area receives water service from the Gary-Hobart Water Corporation on a direct individual billing basis and the service area overlaps portions of Gary and Merrillville, no accurate data is currently available on the amount of water used only by the Town of Merrillville. The approximate water usage for Merrillville would be 2.6 million gallons per day (based on a per capita consumption of 100 gallons per day).

The large diameter mains in the system appear to be adequate to facilitate expansion in the west central residential area, southward along Broadway Street, and also along U.S. Highway 30. Service to areas south of U.S. 30 and east of I-65 has already begun and should accelerate development there. However, service to broad undeveloped areas east of I-65 will probably be sometime in the future and could strain the system if any heavy water users are involved.

The existing system could be improved by providing large diameter loop lines, particularly at connections between 73rd Avenue and 66th Avenue along Taft Street, and Madison Avenue and Taft Street along U.S Highway 30. Installation of loop lines would eliminate dead-ends and permit improved pressure and circulation of the water. Areas now served by a dead-end line would be provided alternate or duplicate service by looping lines in appropriate areas. Dependence on one direction of supply would be eliminated, thereby reducing the possibility of disruption of service due to a broken line.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

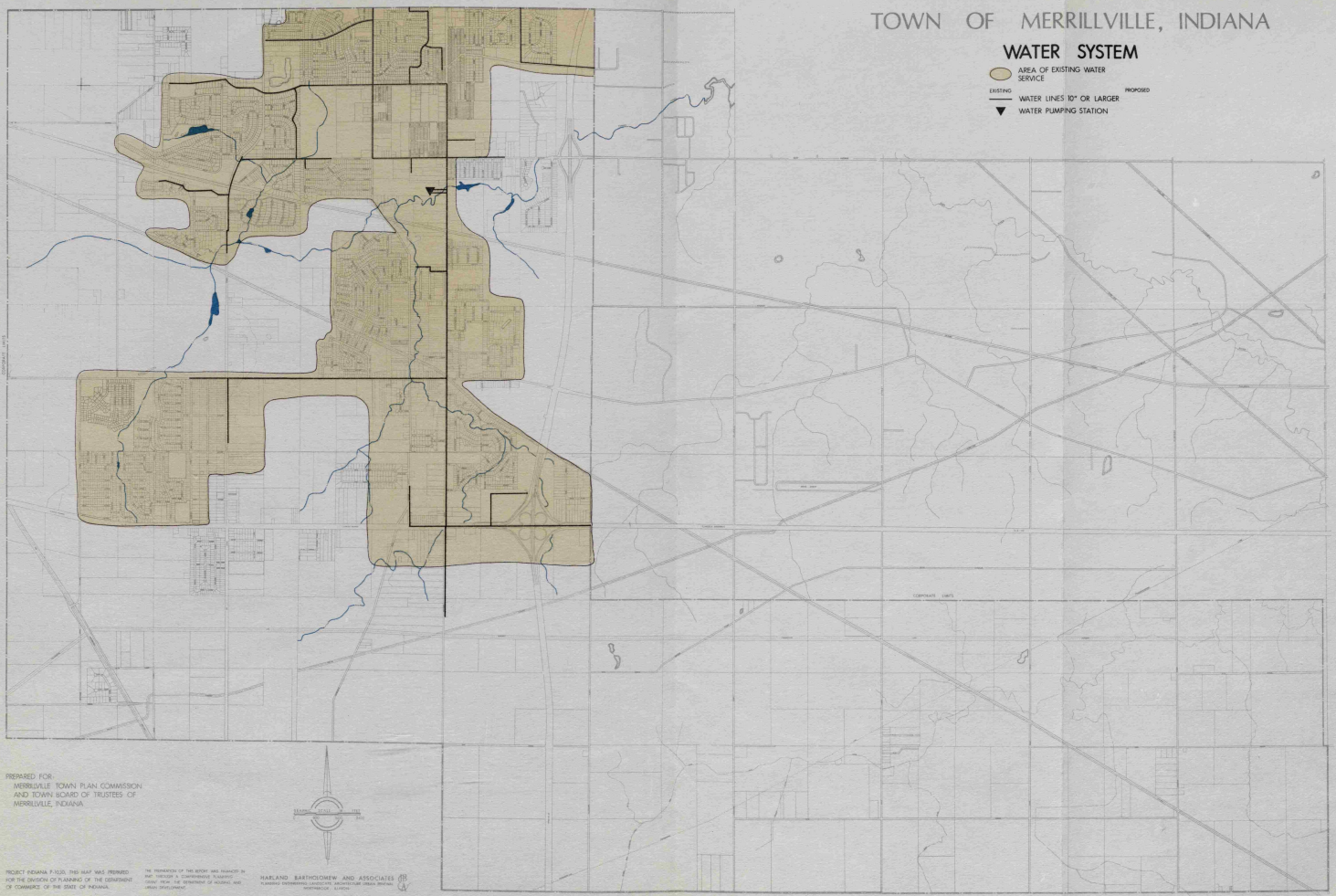
WATER SYSTEM

AREA OF EXISTING WATER SERVICE

EXISTING — PROPOSED

WATER LINES 10" OR LARGER

WATER PUMPING STATION



PREPARED FOR
MERRILLVILLE TOWN PLAN COMMISSION
AND TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

PROJECT INDIANA P-1(2). THIS MAP WAS PREPARED FOR THE DIVISION OF PLANNING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
NORTHBROOK, ILLINOIS

PLATE 15

If the Merrillville area continues to grow at the present pace, considerable additional supply and extension of lines will be required. Contractual arrangements with Gary-Hobart Water Corporation should be such as to assure the Town of Merrillville of adequate volumes of water to serve the growth of the community. The size and exact location of new facilities should be a result of an extensive engineering study considering existing line size and location, pressure, elevation, water demand, characteristics of the future service area, and capacity of source and supply. Detailed analysis such as this can assure the town of a properly sized system to distribute water for both domestic use and fire protection purposes.

Sanitary Sewer Systems

Merrillville is served with sewers by five separate utility companies. (See Plate 16.) The Merrillville Conservancy District, the largest district, consists of three separate areas serving portions of west Merrillville. The Conservancy District receives sewage from the South Broadway Utility District and the Turkey Creek Utility District, as well as serving the area within its own boundaries. Lincoln Garden Utility District and Community Utility District each operate treatment facilities which serve only the area within their boundaries. Independence Hill Utility District is not presently operative.

The sewage collected by Merrillville Conservancy District is pumped by force main from the main lift station at 62nd and Broadway, near Turkey Creek, over the ridgeline near 56th Avenue into the Gary Sanitary District sewer system for treatment. The Gary treatment plant provides primary and secondary treatment and discharges into the Grand Calumet River.

Information on the collection system, including size and adequacy of lines, has not been provided by the District; consequently, no evaluation of the system can be made. However, the District has indicated that the main lift station at 62nd and Broadway pumps approximately two million gallons per day on an average dry day and approximately 4.0 million gallons per day during rainy periods. These fluctuations in flow indicate serious infiltration problems.

The Merrillville Conservancy District is presently extending its trunk lines southward and along U.S. Highway 30 to serve new developments such as Southlake Mall and Methodist Hospital. These lines are under construction and will be completed soon.

The Turkey Creek District is small and serves the Turkey Meadows Subdivision. The Turkey Creek District system discharges to the Conservancy District lines. Collection lines are ample in size and adequate to serve additional growth in the district. The South Broadway Utility District serves only a very small area at the northwest quadrant of I-65 and U.S. 30. The system discharges sewage into the Conservancy District lines. Collection lines are ample in size and adequate to serve additional growth in the district.

The Community Utility District has its own treatment plant, an activated sludge type, providing primary and secondary treatment and discharging into Kaiser Ditch. The plant has a design capacity of 1,100 dwelling units and is currently serving 600 dwelling units. No information is available on the collection system itself.

The Lincoln Gardens District utilizes a mechanical treatment plant located along Old Lincoln Way. Collection lines are ample in size and adequate to serve additional growth in the district.

Land uses not included in the area of service of the utility districts are served by individual treatment units, in most cases septic tanks. Most soil types found throughout the planning area have moderate to severe limitations for septic fields due to poor absorption and a high water table, and septic tanks should not be utilized. While it is possible that small localized areas may be usable, these will require specialized testing to determine if such installations will operate satisfactorily.

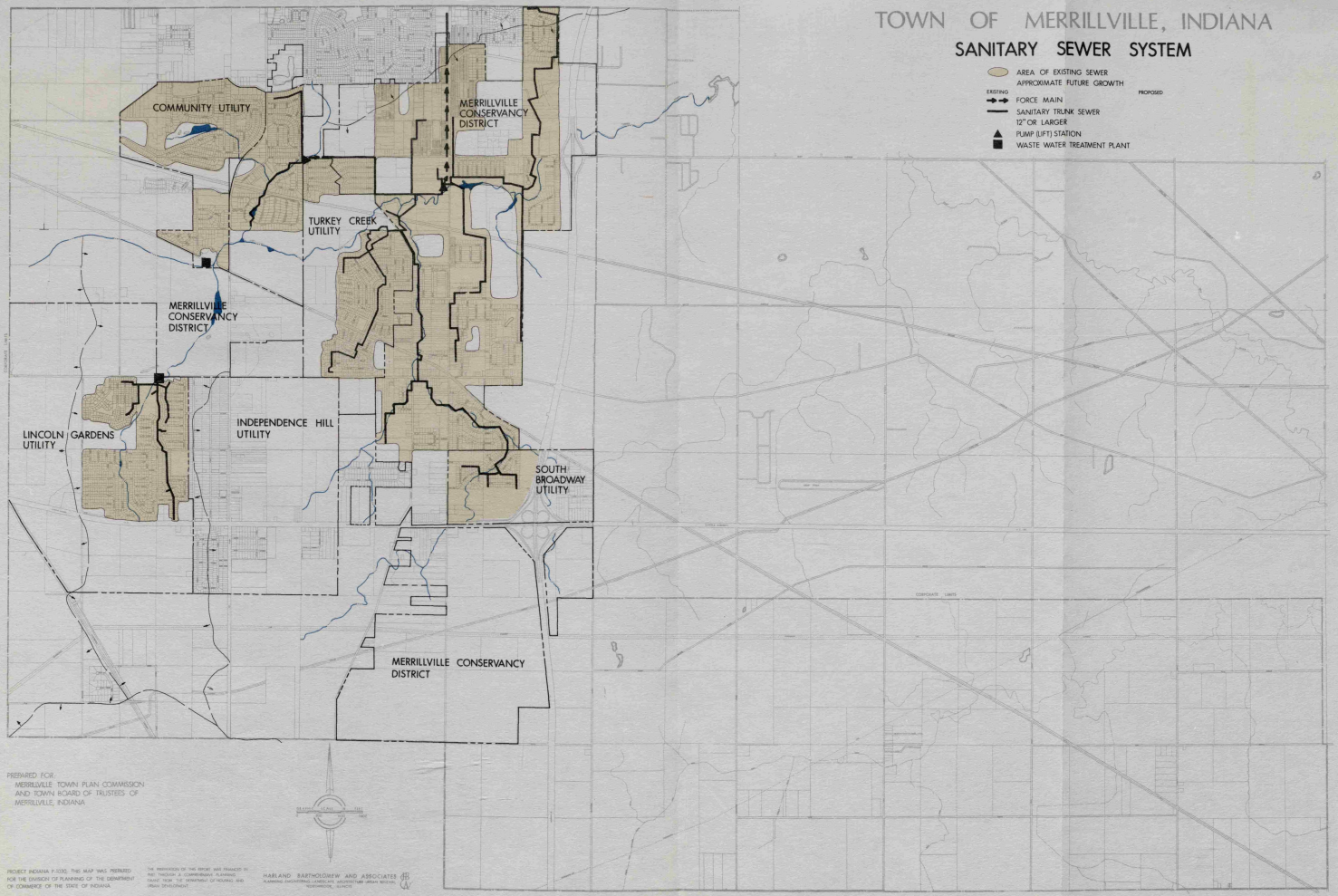
Storm Drainage

Storm drainage facilities in Merrillville are generally found in the newer subdivisions, and associates with major streets and highways. The remaining areas are drained by streams, drainageways, roadside ditches and swales. (See Plate 17.)

The flatness of the terrain and the size of the areas subject to flooding, combined with the lack of adequate storm drainage facilities and a high water table, create substantial problems during periods of heavy rainfall. Intersection flooding, tributary flooding and, occasionally, water in basements are all serious problems affecting residents in areas of the Town.

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM



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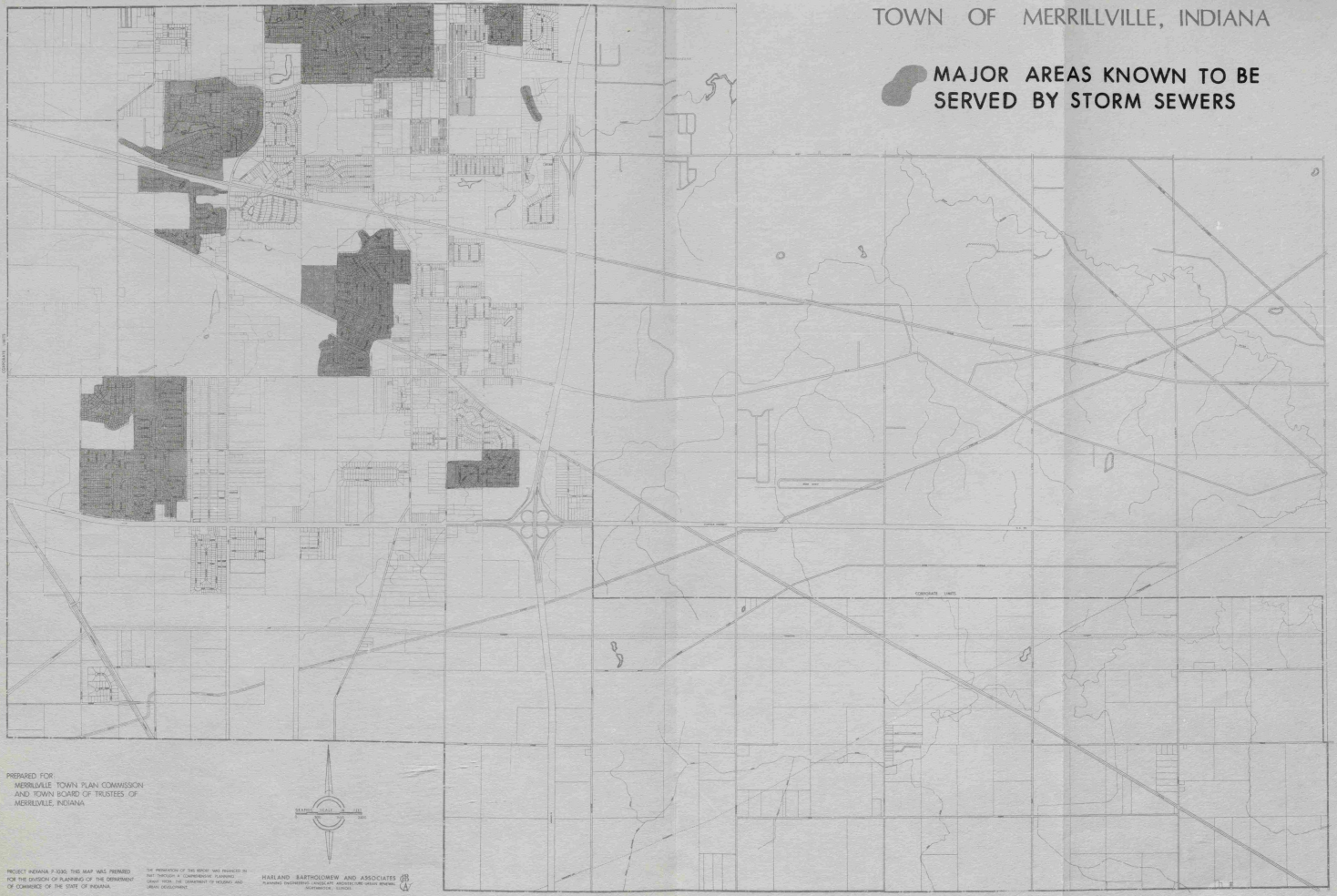
WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA

MAJOR AREAS KNOWN TO BE SERVED BY STORM SEWERS



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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES
PLANNING ENGINEERING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE URBAN RENEWAL
SKOKIE, ILLINOIS

As future development occurs, the Town will need to control building in the floodplain, utilize methods such as retention basins to allow control of heavy stream flows, and provide storm drainage facilities coordinated with street improvements in development areas.

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Merrillville, Indiana.

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LCP #0390